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Tradition and Orthodoxy

T. S. Eliot

A RECENT first visit to Virginia afforded me an appropriate occasion to reconsider a subject on which, some fifteen years ago, I wrote an essay entitled "Tradition and the Individual Talent". In the South one finds, I imagine, at least some recollection of a "tradition", such as the influx of foreign populations has almost effaced in some parts of the North, and such as never established itself in the West: though it is hardly to be expected that a tradition here, any more than anywhere else, should be found in healthy and flourishing growth.

I have been much interested, since the publication a few years ago of a book called *I'll Take My Stand*, in what is sometimes called the agrarian movement in the South, and look forward to any further statements by the same group of writers. My first, and no doubt superficial impressions of their country—I speak as a New Englander—have strengthened my feeling of sympathy with those authors: no one, surely, can cross the Potomac for the first time without being struck by differences so great that their extinction could only mean the death of both cultures. I had previously been led to wonder, in travelling from Boston to New York, at what point Connecticut ceases to be a New England state and is transformed into a New York suburb; but to cross into Virginia is as definite an experience as to cross from England to Wales, almost as definite as to cross the English Channel. And the differences here, with no difference of language or race to support them, have had to survive the immense pressure towards monotony exerted by the industrial expansion of the latter part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century. The Civil War was certainly the greatest disaster in the whole of American history; it is just as certainly a disaster from which the country has never recovered, and perhaps never will: we are always too ready to assume that the good effects of wars, if any, abide permanently while the ill effects are obliterated by time. Yet I think that the chances for the re-establishment of a native culture are perhaps better in the South than in New England. The Southerners are farther away from New York; they have been less industrialized and less invaded by foreign races; and they have a more opulent soil.

My local feelings were stirred very sadly by my first view of New England, on arriving from Montreal, and journeying all one day through the beautiful desolate country of Vermont. Those hills had once, I suppose, been covered with primeval forest; the forest was razed to make sheep pastures for the English settlers; now the sheep are gone, and most of the descendants of the settlers, and a new forest appeared blazing with the melancholy glory of October maple and beech and birch scattered among the evergreens; and after this procession of scarlet and golden and purple wilderness you descend to the sordor of the half-dead mill towns of southern New Hampshire and Massachusetts. It is not necessarily those lands which are the most fertile or most favoured in climate that seem to me the happiest, but those in which a long struggle of adaptation between man and his environment has brought out the best qualities of both; in which the landscape has been moulded by numerous generations of one race, and in which the landscape in turn has modified the race to its own character. And those New England mountains seemed to me to give evidence of a human success so meagre and transitory as to be more desperate than utter failure.

I know very well that the aim of the "neo-agrarians" in the South will be qualified as quixotic, as a hopeless stand for a cause which was lost long before they were born. It will be said that the whole current of economic determinism is against them, and economic determinism is today a god before whom we all fall down and worship with all kinds of music. I believe that these matters may ultimately be determined by what people want; that when anything is generally accepted as desirable, economic laws can be upset in order to achieve it; that it does not so much matter at present whether any measures put forward are practical, as whether the aim is a good aim, and the alternatives intolerable. There are, at the present stage, more serious difficulties in the revival or establishment of a tradition and a way of life, which require immediate consideration.

Tradition is not solely, or even primarily, the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of "the same people living in the same place". It involves a good deal which can be called *taboo*: that this word is used in our time in an almost exclusively derogatory sense is to me a curiosity of some significance. We become conscious of these items, or conscious of their importance, usually only after they have begun to fall into desuetude, as we are aware of the leaves of a tree when the autumn wind begins to blow them off—when they have separately ceased to be vital. Energy may be wasted at that point in a frantic endeavour to collect the leaves as they fall and gum them onto the branches: but the sound tree will put forth new leaves, and the dry tree should be put to the axe. We are always in danger, in clinging to an old tradition, or attempting to re-establish one, of confusing the vital and the unessential, the real and the sentimental. Our second danger is to associate tradition with the immovable; to think of it as something hostile to all change; to aim to return to some previous condition which we imagine as having been capable of preservation in perpetuity, instead of aiming to stimulate the life which produced that condition in its time.

It is not of advantage to us to indulge a sentimental attitude towards the past. For one thing, in even the very best living tradition there is always a mixture of good and bad, and much that deserves criticism; and for another, tradition is not a matter of feeling alone.

Nor can we safely, without very critical examination, dig ourselves in stubbornly to a few dogmatic notions, for what is a healthy belief at one time may, unless it is one of the few fundamental things, be a pernicious prejudice at another. Nor should we cling to traditions as a way of asserting our superiority over less favoured peoples. What we can do is to use our minds, remembering that a tradition without intelligence is not worth having, to discover what is the best life for us not as a political abstraction, but as a particular people in a particular place; what in the past is worth preserving and what should be rejected; and what conditions, within our power to bring about, would foster the society that we desire. Stability is obviously necessary. You are hardly likely to develop tradition except where the bulk of the population is relatively so well off where it is that it has no incentive or pressure to move about. The population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both become adulterate.* What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable. There must be a proper balance between urban and rural, industrial and agricultural development. And a spirit of excessive tolerance is to be deprecated.

We must also remember that—in spite of every means of transport that can be devised—the local community must always be the most permanent, and that the concept of the nation is by no means fixed and invariable.* It is, so to speak, only one *fluctuating circle* of loyalties between the centre, the family and the local community, and the periphery of humanity entire. Its strength and its geographical size depend upon the comprehensiveness of a way of life which can harmonize parts with distinct local characters of their own. When it becomes no more than a centralized machinery it may affect some of its parts to their detriment, or to what they believe to be their detriment; and we get the regional movements which have appeared within recent years. It is only a law of nature, that local patriotism, when it represents a distinct tradition and culture, takes precedence over a more abstract national patriotism.

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* Or else you may get a *caste* system, based on original distinctions of race, as in India: which is a very different matter from *classes*, which presuppose homogeneity of race and a fundamental equality. But social classes, as distinct from economic classes, hardly exist today.

So far I have only pronounced a few doctrines all of which have been developed by other writers.** I do not intend to trespass upon their fields. I wish simply to indicate the connotation which the term *tradition* has for me, before proceeding to associate it with the concept of *orthodoxy*, which seems to me more fundamental (with its opposite, *heterodoxy*, for which I shall also use the term *heresy*) than the pair *classicism-romanticism* which is frequently used.

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* "To place the redemptive work of the Christian Faith in social affairs in its proper setting, it is necessary to have clearly in mind at the outset that the consciousness of 'the nation' as *the* social unit is a very recent and contingent experience. It belongs to a limited historical period and is bound up with certain specific happenings, theories of society and attitudes to life as a whole." (V. A. Demant, *God, Man and Society*, p. 146).

** I should not like to hold any one of them responsible for all of my opinions, however, especially any that the reader may find irritating. I have in mind Mr. Chesterton and his "distributism", Mr. Christopher Dawson (*The Making of Europe*), Mr. Demant and Mr. M. B. Reckitt and their colleagues. I have also in mind the views of Mr. Allen Tate and his friends as evinced in *I'll Take My Stand*, and those of several Scottish nationalists.

As we use the term *tradition* to include a good deal more than "traditional religious beliefs", so I am here giving the term *orthodoxy* a similar inclusiveness; and though of course I believe that a right tradition for us must be also a Christian tradition, and that orthodoxy in general implies Christian orthodoxy, I do not propose to lead the present discussion to a theological conclusion.

The relation between tradition and orthodoxy in the past is evident enough; as is also the great difference there may be between being an orthodox Christian and a member of the Tory Party. But Conservatism, so far as it has ever existed, so far as it has ever been intelligent, and not merely one of the names for hand-to-mouth party politics, has been associated with the defense of tradition, ideally if not often in fact. On the other hand, there was certainly, a hundred years ago, a relation between the Liberalism which attacked the Church and the Liberalism which appeared in politics. According to a contemporary, William Palmer, the former

> were eager to eliminate from the Prayer-book the belief in the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Atonement, the worship of Christ. They called for the admission of Unitarian infidels as fellow-believers. They would eviscerate the Prayer-book, reduce the Articles to a deistic formulary, abolish all subscriptions or adhesions to formularies, and reduce religion to a state of anarchy and dissolution. These notions were widely spread. They were advocated in numberless publications, and greedily received by a democratic, thoughtless public. . . . Christianity, as it had existed for eighteen centuries, was unrepresented in this turmoil. [Quoted in *Northern Catholicism*, p. 9.]

It is well to remember that this sort of Liberalism was flourishing a century ago; it is also well to remember that it is flourishing still. Not many months ago I read an article by an eminent Liberal divine from which I have preserved the following sentence:

> We now have at hand an apparatus which, though not yet able to discover reality, is fully competent to identify and to eliminate the disproportionate mass of error which has found lodgment in our creeds and codes. The factual untruth and the fallacious inference are being steadily eliminated from the hereditary body of religious faith and moral practice.

And, in order not to limit my instances to theology, I will quote from another contemporary Liberal practitioner, a literary critic this time:

> Aided by psycho-analysis, which gave them new weapons, many of the poets and dramatists of our day have dug into the most perverse of human complexes, exposing them with the scalpel of a surgeon rather than that of a philosopher.

At this point I may do well to anticipate a possible misunderstanding. In applying the standard of orthodoxy to contemporary literature my emphasis will be upon its collective rather than its static meaning. A superficial apprehension of the term might suggest the assumption that everything worth saying has been said, and that the possible forms of expression have all been discovered and developed; the assumption that novelty of form and of substance was always to be deprecated. What is objectionable, from the point of view which I have adopted, is not novelty or originality in themselves, but their glorification for their own sake. The artist's concern with originality, certainly, may be considered as largely negative: he wishes only to avoid saying what has already been said as well as possible. But I am not here occupied with the standards, ideals, and rules which the artist or writer should set before himself, but with the way in which his work should be taken by the reader; not with the aberrations of writers, but with those of readers and critics. To assert that a work is "original" should be very modest praise: it should be no more than to say that the work is not patently negligible.

Contemporary literature may conveniently be divided as follows. There is first that which attempts to do what has already been done perfectly, and it is to this superfluous kind of writing that the word "traditional" is commonly applied: *mis*applied, for the word itself implies a movement. Tradition cannot mean standing still. Of course, no writer ever admits to himself that he has *no* originality; but the fact that a writer can be satisfied to use the exact idiom of a predecessor is very suspicious; you cannot write satire in the line of Pope or the stanza of Byron. The second kind of contemporary writing aims at an exaggerated novelty, a novelty usually of a trifling kind, which conceals from the uncritical reader a fundamental commonplaceness. If you examine the work of any great innovator in chronological order, you may expect to find that the author has been driven on, step by step, in his innovations, by an inner necessity, and that the novelty of form has rather been forced upon him by his material than deliberately sought. It is well also to remember that what any one writer can contribute in the way of "originality" is very small indeed, and has often a pitifully small relation to the mass of his writings.

As for the small number of writers, in this or any other period, who are worth taking seriously, I am very far from asserting that any of these is wholly "orthodox" or even that it would be relevant to rank them according to degrees of orthodoxy. It is not fair, for one thing, to judge the individual by what can be actual only in society as a whole; and most of us are heretical in one way or another. Nor is the responsibility solely with the individual. Furthermore, the essential of any important heresy is not simply that it is wrong: it is that it is partly right. It is characteristic of the more interesting heretics, in the context in which I use the term, that they have an exceptionally acute perception, or profound insight, of some part of the truth; an insight more important often than the indirect perceptions of those who are aware of more, but less acutely aware of anything. So far as we are able to redress the balance, effect the compensation, ourselves, we may find such authors of the greatest value. If we value them as they value themselves we shall go astray. And in the present state of affairs, with the low degree of education to be expected of public and of reviewers, we are more likely to go wrong than right; we must remember too, that an heresy is apt to have a seductive simplicity, to make a direct and persuasive appeal to intellect and emotions, and to be altogether more plausible than the truth.

It will already have been observed that my contrast of heresy and orthodoxy has some analogy to the more usual one of romanticism and classicism; and I wish to emphasize this analogy myself, as a safeguard against carrying it too far. I would wish in any case to make the point that these are not matters with which creative writers can afford to bother over-much, or matters with which they do, as a rule, in practice greatly concern themselves. It is true that from time to time writers have labelled themselves "romanticists" or "classicists", just as they have from time to time banded themselves together under other names. These names which groups of writers and artists give themselves are the delight of professors and historians of literature, but should not be taken very seriously; their chief value is temporary and political–that, simply, of helping to make the authors known to a contemporary public; and I doubt whether any poet has ever done himself anything but harm by attempting to write as a "romantic" or as a "classicist". No sensible author, in the midst of something that he is trying to write, can stop to consider whether it is going to be romantic or the opposite. At the moment when one writes, one is what one is, and the damages of a lifetime, and of having been born into an unsettled or a torpid society, cannot be repaired at the moment of composition.

The danger of using terms like "romantic" and "classic"–this does not however give us permission to avoid them altogether–does not spring so much from the confusion caused by those who use these terms about their own work, as from inevitable shifts of meaning in context. We do not mean quite the same thing when we speak of a writer as romantic, as we do when we speak of a literary period as romantic. Furthermore, we may have in mind, on any particular occasion, certain virtues or vices more or less justly associated with one term or the other, and it is doubtful whether there is any total sum of virtues or of vices which may be arrogated to either class. The opportunities for systematic misunderstanding, and for futile controversy, are accordingly almost ideal; and discussion of the subject is generally conducted by excitement of passion and prejudice, rather than by reason. Finally—and this is the most important point—the differences represented by these two terms are not such as can be confined to a purely literary context. In using them, you are ultimately bringing in all human values, and according to your own scheme of valuation. A thoroughgoing classicist is likely to be a thoroughgoing individualist, like the late Irving Babbitt; so that one should be on guard, in using such terms, against being thoroughgoing.

When we press such a term to an exactness which it will not bear, confusions are bound to occur. Such, for instance, is the association sometimes made between classicism and Catholicism. It is possible for a man to adhere to both; but he should not be under the delusion that the connection is necessarily objective: it may spring from some unity within himself, but that unity, as it is in him, may not be valid for the rest of the world. And you cannot treat on the same footing the maintenance of religious and literary principles. I have said that you cannot restrict the terms "romantic" and "classical", as professors of literature conveniently do, to the literary context; but on the other hand you cannot wholly free them from that context either. There is surely something wrong when a critic divides all works of art neatly into one group and the other and then plumps for the romantic or the classical as a whole. Whichever you like in theory, it is suspicious if you prefer works altogether of one class in practice: probably you have either made the terms merely names for what you admire and for what you do not, or you have forced and falsified your tastes.* Here again is the error of being too thoroughgoing.

I may as well admit at this point that in this discussion of terms I have my own log to roll. Some years ago, in the preface to a small volume of essays, I made a sort of summary declaration of faith in matters religious, political, and literary.** The facility with which this statement has been quoted has helped to reveal to me that as it stands the statement is injudicious. It may suggest that the three subjects are of equal importance to me, which is not so; it may suggest that I accept all three beliefs on the same grounds, which is not so; and it may suggest that I believe that they all hang together or fall together, which would be the most serious misunderstanding of all. That there are connections for me I of course admit, but these illuminate my own mind rather than the external world; and I now see that there was danger of suggesting to outsiders that the Faith is a political principle or a literary fashion, and the sum of all a dramatic posture.

From another aspect also I have a personal interest in the clearing up of the use of the terms with which I have been concerned. My friend Dr. Paul Elmer More is not the first critic to call attention to an apparent incoherence between my verse and my critical prose—though he is the first whose perplexity on this account has caused me any distress. It would appear that while I maintain the most correct opinions in my criticism, I do nothing but violate them in my verse; and thus appear in a double, if not double-faced rôle. I feel no shame in this matter. I am not, of course, interested by those critics who praise my criticism in order to discredit my verse, or those who praise my verse in order to discredit my opinions in religious or social affairs; I am only interested in answering those critics who, like Dr. More, have paid me the compliment—deserved or not does not here matter—of expressing some approval of both. I should say that in one's prose reflections one may legitimately be occupied with ideals, whereas in the writing of verse one can only deal with actuality. Why, I would ask, is most religious verse so bad; and why does so little religious verse reach the highest levels of poetry? Largely, I think, because of a pious insincerity. The capacity for writing poetry is rare; the capacity for religious emotion of the first intensity is rare; and it is to be expected that the existence of both capacities in the same individual should be rarer still. People who write devotional verse are usually writing as they want to feel, rather than as they do feel. Likewise, in an age like the present, it could only be poetry of the very greatest rank that could be genuinely what Dr. More would be obliged to call "classical"; poets of lower ability—that is all but such as half a dozen perhaps in the world's history—could only be "classical" by being pseudo-classical; by being unfaithful and dishonest to their experience. It should hardly be necessary to add that the "classical" is just as unpredictable as the romantic, and that most of us would not recognize a classical writer if he appeared, so queer and horrifying he would seem even to those who clamour for him.

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* For instance: two of my own favourite authors are Sir Thomas Malory and Racine.

** EDITOR'S NOTE: "The general point of view may be described as classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion." (*For Lancelot Andrewes,* p. vii.)

I hold–in summing up–that a *tradition* is rather a way of feeling and acting which characterizes a group throughout generations; and that it must largely be, or that many of the elements in it must be, unconscious; whereas the maintenance of *orthodoxy* is a matter which calls for the exercise of all our conscious intelligence. The two will therefore considerably complement each other. Not only is it possible to conceive of a tradition being definitely bad; a good tradition might, in changing circumstances, become out of date. Tradition has not the means to criticize itself; it may perpetuate much that is trivial or of transient significance as well as what is vital and permanent. And while tradition, being a matter of good habits, is necessarily real only in a social group, orthodoxy exists whether realized in anyone's thought or not. Orthodoxy also, of course, represents a consensus between the living and the dead: but a whole generation might conceivably pass without any orthodox thought; or, as by Athanasius, orthodoxy may be upheld by one man against the world. Tradition may be conceived as a by-product of right living, not to be aimed at directly. It is of the blood, so to speak, rather than of the brain: it is the means by which the vitality of the past enriches the life of the present. In the co-operation of both is the reconciliation of thought and feeling. The concepts of *romantic* and *classic* are both more limited in scope and less definite in meaning. Accordingly they do not carry with them the implication of absolute value which those who have defended one against the other would give them: it is only in particular contexts that they can be contrasted in this way, and there are always values more important than any that either of these terms can adequately represent.

[This article is based on one of the Page-Barbour Lectures given by Mr. Eliot at the University of Virginia, 1933.]

Venite Exultemus

HOWARD D. ROELOFS

IT IS the good fortune of this present age to have discovered that Religion is a Good Thing. People of earlier ages believed in this religion or in that, and on occasion warred to the death rather than abandon a chosen religion or in order to impose that religion upon others. History tells us even of people who practised the religion they professed. Such people, of course, were rare. But none of these men of a less enlightened age knew that the simple possession of a religion is a Good Thing. It has remained for us through anthropological, psychological, and sociological research not only to have discovered this important truth, but to have proved it. Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology are the witnesses and supply the evidence that this is so. To have a religion is a Good Thing.

It is the *misfortune* of this present age to have discovered that no Religion is true. This great discovery holds for all existing religions including our own, for all are false. To say "including our own" is thus logically redundant, but rhetorically essential, for it is the point of this modern discovery. People of earlier ages quite frequently recognized that other religions were false, but they obstinately persisted in holding their own to be true. History tells us even of people who were inclined to believe that somehow all religions were true, including their own. Such people, of course, were rare. We have changed all that. We, through anthropological, psychological, and sociological research, have discovered that all religions, including our own, are false. And we can prove it. Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology are the witnesses and supply the evidence that this is so. All religions, including our own, are false.

This second discovery is the great misfortune of our age. It robs us of the fruits of our fortunate first discovery. For while religion is in general always a Good Thing, any particular religion is particularly a Good Thing only to those who believe it. This bars us out. For we have discovered and proved that all existing religions, including our own, are false. Accordingly, we do not, we cannot, believe in our own. To be incapable of believing what we know to be false, I need scarcely remark, is the great virtue of the present race of men. Therefore, our religion is not a Good Thing for us. The loss is great. Competent observers agree that the lack of the benefits of religion is one of the striking and pathetic phenomena of the age.

It may be curious to some that so little has been attempted to alleviate this distressing situation. Those who find this curious, do not realize the difficulties that confront all efforts to regain for us the benefits of religion. They may even suppose that nothing is required but to select as a new religion something known to be true, in order for us all to believe it and thus obtain once more the blessings of religion. With so much science already available and more being produced every minute, all of it, of course, strictly and verifiedly true, it should surely be easy to take a little science, otherwise unemployed, and use it for a religion.

This, however, simply will not do. The reason is a nice one and not always fully appreciated. Hence the numerous efforts to make of this science, or of that, a religion. All of these attempts sooner or later end in failure. The reason is this. A religion known to be false we cannot believe. This is our virtue though it robs us of the blessings of that religion. But equally what we know to be true, we cannot believe. For we know; and when we know, we do not believe: we know. Therefore, what we know to be true, cannot serve us as a religion. This bars out all science, with the possible exception of physics. This possible exception, however, is of no practical importance. Those who believe in physics not infrequently believe also in God, not knowing as yet that all existing religions, including their own, are false.

Whatever the fate of the physicists, we have now isolated the conditions under which alone it is possible for the rest of us to have a religion and enjoy its benefits. Whatever our religion is to be, it must meet two conditions. First, it cannot be known to be false. That eliminates all existing religions. Second, it cannot be known to be true. That rules out all Science, with the exception noted. Our Religion, then, must be a something we know not what.

What can this thing be and where can we find it? I have discovered it. That is my good fortune and I now propose to share it with you. The something we know not what, which is to be our Religion, is Sociology. Sociology is not a Science. No one can prove it is true. Certainly no one *knows* that it is true. But equally it cannot be proved to be false. Sociology and all it contains is not, and cannot be, a matter of knowledge. Therefore let it be our Religion.

I realize that to some this may appear rather sudden. That, however, is a common character of discoveries, great ones especially. I wish now to make a slight contribution to this new Religion. This contribution has numerous advantages. If adopted and used it will ameliorate the shock of discovery and ease the transition to the acceptance of the new Religion. More important, it can be used as a test to verify the excellence of what is here proposed. A sure test of the excellence of any religion is its fruitfulness in cult and ritual. I now present a modest sample of what may be expected of Sociology in those fields. This sample is best appreciated when sung, and I commend you to practise it at home. The form is familiar, and suitable tunes will be found at the back of most Hymnals. If you find this sample good, congratulate yourselves on being well on the way to accepting Sociology as your Religion with all the benefits that may bring. You may even be inspired to add to the liturgy thus begun.

A NEW CANTICLE

VENITE, EXULTEMUS SOCIOLOGO

(To be said or sung at the opening of all groups)

*O come, let us sing unto Sociology; * let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our group consciousness.*
*Let us come before her presence with thanksgiving; * and show ourselves glad in her with projects.*
*For Sociology is a great Hope; * and a great Light above all Hopes.*
In her hand are all the varieties of the experimental method; and the strength of statistics is hers also.*
*The Social Group is hers, and she made it; * and her hands prepared the charts thereof.*
O, come, let us study and fall down; and let us do case studies before Sociology, our Guide.*

For she is the Maker of all Contacts; * *and we are the people of her Adjustments and the sheep of her Complexes.*
*O, worship Sociology in the beauty of the Group Spirit;** *let both the privileged and the underprivileged stand in awe of her.*
For she cometh, for she cometh to evaluate the earth; * *and with statistical measurements to judge the world, and the peoples with an intelligence test.*

Glory be to Sociology, to Statistics, and to the Group; *
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

AMEN.

The Agrarians Deny a Leader

AUBREY STARKE

THE publication in 1930 of the symposium *I'll Take My Stand*, by Twelve Southerners, was the firing on Fort Sumter of a new civil war. There had been previous attacks on the industrial order, triumphant in America since the Northern victory of 1865, by discontented individualists, and by some of the Southern Agrarians who contributed to the symposium. But not before the volume with the defiant title appeared was it possible to know fully what the programme of the new Southern Agrarians was; and not before it appeared was the country as a whole aware of the strength of the forces of the new rebellion.

Since 1930 the programme of the Southern Agrarians (if such their "Statement of Principles" may be called) has become widely known, and—thanks considerably to the somewhat fortuitous circumstances of nation-wide and lasting economic depression, which has raised serious questions affecting the industrial capitalistic society—also fairly widely approved. However, in spite of the fact that the authors of the book made clear that their programme was not one for the South only, and in spite of the fact that their subsequent explanations of their position have appeared chiefly in Northern magazines, such as *The Hound and Horn*, THE AMERICAN REVIEW, and *The New Republic*, it has been generally assumed that the new agrarian protest against capitalistic industrialism was not merely an assertion of belief in the order of the

Old South, but a gesture of reverence and homage to the Old South, to its gods, its heroes, its *lares* and *penates*.

That such is not the case, Mr. Allen Tate's biography of Jefferson Davis should have made clear—though there is considerable doubt as to whether Jefferson Davis has ever been one of the true gods of the Old South, or was before the martyrdom imposed by the North. But that the Agrarians feel no compulsion of devotion to the memory of Southerners generally cherished has been made most clear in recent essays by two contributors to *I'll Take My Stand*, on Sidney Lanier.

Since Sidney Lanier himself championed agrarianism, and might properly be considered a precursor of the New Agrarians, his belittlement by Mr. Allen Tate and Mr. Robert Penn Warren is strange and ungrateful, but not uninstructive. If we examine the charges made by them against Lanier, and the grounds for them, we shall learn a good deal about the soundness of agrarian literary criticism, and so be able to view in a fresh light agrarian criticism of economic systems. That Lanier is a poet greatly beloved throughout the South, and that the attacks by Mr. Tate (in *The New Republic*, August 30, 1933) and by Mr. Warren (in THE AMERICAN REVIEW, November, 1933) were made almost at the moment when the United Daughters of the Confederacy, assembled in convention in Baltimore, were hearing addresses on Lanier's living name and increasing fame, and making plans to secure his election to the New York University Hall of Fame, is a coincidence, but not significant. The point I wish to emphasize here is not that the New Agrarians—as represented by Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren—can be guilty of extreme "disloyalty" to the Old South, and its heroes, but that they can misread clear statements and misinterpret to suit their ends.

Mr. Tate, calling Lanier "A Southern Romantic", and Mr. Warren, characterizing him as "The Blind Poet", made charges against Lanier so similar that they may, and surely without incurring the wrath of either essayist, be combined for listing here. They are:

(1) That Lanier made a mistaken effort to "transform poetry into a branch of music".

(2) That "his poetry had little to say to his century in substance or in technique", being a "blurring of images in a random kind of verbiage", lacking "precision of statement", and "sprinkled . . . with meaningless didacticism".

(3) That "as he failed to present one clear image in his verse, so he failed to see through a single leading idea of his age. . . . [He] identified with 'truth' those political notions, those public movements, those theories of art, which promised success to his career".

(4) That his nationalism was a nationalism of Trade, the nationalism, that is, of the victorious North—in spite of his protests against the domination of Trade in "The Symphony" and elsewhere.

(5) That "he believed that the searing blast of art should be tempered to the shorn and public lamb; that he must defer to the public taste, consciously, in order better at some later time to instruct it".

(6) That he accepted too readily and applauded too enthusiastically the nationalism, the science, the art, and the discoveries (photography, phonography,

et cetera) of his own day—especially "the delusion that the function of applied science is to make men at home in nature".

(7) That he was himself "the final product of all that was dangerous in Romanticism: his theory of personality, his delusion of prophecy, his aesthetic premise, his uninformed admiration of science, his nationalism, his passion for synthesis, his theory of progress".

(8) That he "was a prophet foretelling only the blessings of our own age . . . a nineteenth-century leader who helped to make us what we are today".

That these charges fall into two groups is apparent. Lanier's defects as listed by Messrs. Tate and Warren are aesthetic and philosophic—faults of taste and of artistic practice, and failures of understanding and of intelligent thinking. With the criticism of Lanier's aesthetic theories and practice we can have little or nothing to do here, because of lack of space and because our examination of Lanier, in connection with the agrarian programme, is not primarily an examination for aesthetic purposes. It is with the charge that Lanier was blind to the defects of his age, and that instead of understanding and championing a Southern way of life (that of the Agrarians!) he flattered Northern industrialism and celebrated the Northern way, that we are here most concerned.

It may, however, be remarked that it is unfair to accuse Lanier of tempering "the searing blast of art . . . to the shorn and public lamb". Messrs. Tate and Warren are fortunate in living in an era in which a Southern literary artist may hope—largely as a result of the South's previous yielding to the forces of

Northern industrialism—to make a living by his pen, and to secure publication of poems, books, and essays directed even against the existing order. One has only to study a few issues of *The Nation* of the period of Lanier's literary career (1874-1881) to realize that Lanier was compelled by necessity to "defer to public taste, consciously", in order not merely that he might "at some later time . . . instruct it" but that he might keep his body and soul together until that later time (which he failed, however, in doing). If that he did so is not to his credit, it is certainly not, from any reasonable point of view, to his shame.

Some understanding of his sufferings—his physical suffering, caused by actual want—Lanier gives in his posthumous and not too allegorical poem, "June Dreams, in January", and again in that neglected juvenile, "The Hard Times in Elfland", which with its allegory of Santa Claus financially ruined by his investment in watered stock of the Celestial Railway Company seems today more contemporary than any other of Lanier's poems. His desire to speak out boldly in criticism of his times, if not apparent in such poems as "Corn" and "The Symphony", is certainly manifest in the but lately republished commencement address delivered in Americus, Georgia, in 1869, and in a poem, "Remonstrance", publication of which Lanier tried hard but unsuccessfully to secure. Much of the work Lanier did see published, and most of his work that has been published since his death, is mere literary hack-work. As such it is not often surprisingly good, but it is often—for a product of the "Brown Decades" —surprisingly outspoken, and denunciatory.

To call Lanier's nationalism a left-handed acceptance of Northern industrialism is to label him as something of a Benedict Arnold of the Southern way of life. Mr. Tate explains his reference to Lanier's "flattery" of the industrial capitalism of the North thus: " 'The Psalm of the West' is praise of 'nationalism', *argal* of Northern sectionalism, *argal* of industrialism. I hope this is not too esoteric in its logic."

Esoteric it is, however. Lanier, who had fought through the war as a Confederate soldier until November, 1864, when he passed into a Northern prison, and from whom at his death the Civil War was but one year more remote than the World War is from us today, did not see that the triumph of the North meant the triumph of industrialism, and could not have seen it. He was no prophet, as his attempts at prophecy (as in his discussion of the "etherialization" which he thought was taking place in all orders of social activity) prove. It is an easy thing in 1934 to say what the Northern victory in 1865 brought about in the succeeding sixty-nine years, but it would have been remarkable if anyone dying in 1881 could have foretold the course of industrial capitalism for the next fifty-three years (especially the bond-servant it was to make of science) and the depression that began in 1929, in a land of plenty.

The Northern victory to Lanier meant the shattering of his dream that the new (agrarian!) Confederacy was to inaugurate an era of artistic and intellectual splendour, rivalling that of the Athens of Pericles. It meant the loss of health, of opportunities for intellectual advancement, and of any chance of living the peaceful, ordered life the New Agrarians celebrate. It meant a revelation of political chicanery, dishonesty, and corruption that no one who did not live through the period can well appreciate, in spite of the graphic picture of the era drawn by Mr. Claude Bowers and in spite of the recent revelations before the Senate committee on banking. It meant disillusionment that was to make some Southerners expatriates in Brazil, Honduras, France, and England; others —like Burton Harrison, President Davis's secretary— converts to the Northern order; and still others "diehards", "unreconstructed rebels", Daughters of the Confederacy, and Southern agrarians.

Lanier however neither sought refuge in another land nor comfort in any adopted attitude. He accepted defeat, admitted it, and proceeded to forget it, in every way that was possible but also noble and dignified, and that he did so seems to me greatly to his credit. He did not embrace a nationalism that was really nothing more than Northern sectionalism, but he tried to be a reconciling influence between North and South and to recover, for himself and for those who would hear him, the old ideals of nationalism known to Washington and Jefferson and Adams. Though one hesitates to use the figure, because of the implication of "spread-eagleism" (which Lanier specifically deplored), his nationalism is the nationalism of those fine cabinet-makers of the early Republic who made of even the Federal bird itself a beautiful decorative design. If, in his Centennial Cantata and "The Psalm of the West", Lanier emphasized episodes from New England colonial history rather than from the colonial history of Virginia, it was because, for reasons that held in Lanier's day as well as later, those episodes were the more familiar, and therefore the more useful for his purpose; but also because—and may a Southerner not say it without being accused of disloyalty to the South?—the settlement of New England possessed a spiritual significance that the settlement of Virginia (which alone antedated it) lacked. In "The Psalm of the West" the best passages, poetically, are those which ascribe to Columbus emotions—dreams for the land of his discovery—which Columbus surely never felt. It was no thought of the United States under the presidency of Grant that inspired Lanier but a vision of America as a land of promise still, in spite of Civil War, and Reconstruction, and Civil Rights Bills, and of corruption that touched the White House.

And if, in that Centennial Ode (for "The Psalm of the West" was commissioned for publication in *Lippincott's Magazine* for July, 1876) Lanier describes the Civil War "unrealistically", as Mr. Warren says, as a chivalrous joust between two knights, Heart (the South) and Brain (the North), he was in doing that being a little more clear than Mr. Warren is willing to admit. In his 1869 commencement address Lanier had stated:

> Let us not forget . . . to accept and digest the unpalatable truth that we, here in the South, are among the crudest theorizers in the world. We put together too many unsubstantial hypotheses. Day after day our public journals are filled with letters whose conclusions rest neither on logic nor on fact. I fear we are inordinately fond of predicting, of supposing, of prophesying. . . . Let us learn to delay our conclusions until we have gathered together many facts, until we have taken all large and many-sided views, and above all until we have

actually tried them. . . . Do not announce your projects before they are born; do not bury them before they are dead. Think, labour, wait.

What Lanier said under guise of the allegory of Heart and Brain (written possibly as early as 1862, and merely re-used in 1876) was true then as it is now. A cultured Southern lady who knew Lanier, a loyal daughter of the "Old South", wrote recently in reference to the removal of a young Northerner—Sidney Lanier's grandson!—to the South, to make his home there: "He will not be disappointed if he comes prepared to find less *head* but perhaps more *heart* here than in New England." She was surprised later, upon rereading "The Psalm of the West", to find that Lanier himself had expressed so clearly what she meant. Lanier's statement of a truth is courteous, and generous. That it is "unrealistic" as an account of the Civil War is beside the point: a realistic description would have been out of place in a centennial ode as a matter of taste and of tact. Moreover, it is usually the case that those who suffer most are the least eloquently descriptive of their sufferings. Though Lanier left realistic enough accounts of warfare and imprisonment in *Tiger Lilies*, the realistic classic on the Civil War is *The Red Badge of Courage*, by Stephen Crane, who was born in 1871.

When it came to fighting a battle in behalf of a cause that was, for Lanier as for us, a living cause, and not one already lost, he too could be brutally frank and realistic, even to the extent of pointing out that economic want is a prime but inexcusable cause of female prostitution. The late Vernon Louis Parrington observed that Lanier was "the first of our poets to cry out against [industrialism] as a deadly blight on life and civilization"; and Mr. Henry Steele Commager has recently called Lanier's poem "The Symphony" "a savage indictment of industrialism". It is that, in spite of the defects of vocabulary, and of imagery, which date the poem as Victorian. He who could write

> Does business mean, *Die, you—live, I*?
> Then "Trade is trade" but sings a lie:
> 'Tis only war grown miserly.
> If business is battle, name it so:
> War-crimes less will shame it so:
> And widows less will blame it so.

was not one ever to flatter industrialism, even indirectly, or by implication. And Lanier's life-long desire, we should remember, was to write a long poem on "The Jacquerie", the savage uprising of the peasants in fourteenth-century France. It was Trade, as he explained in a letter, "that hatched the Jacquerie", as well as John Brown. "Trade killed Chivalry, and now sits in the throne."

Lanier distrusted industrialism, because he hated social injustice, and he saw that capitalistic industrialism produced it. If Lanier accepted science, hailed excitedly the new scientific discoveries of his age, and the application of science to inventions that should make living more agreeable instead of more sordid and unendurable (as Mr. Andrew Nelson Lytle has convincingly demonstrated in his contribution to *I'll Take My Stand*), it was because Lanier, even in the 1870's, had faith enough to believe that science, which seemed a divine gift, could not be used for man's debasement. He did not foresee that the invention of the mazda bulb would produce, ultimately, Samuel Insull, the domestic suffering caused by the collapse of Mid-West Utilities, and a diplomatic incident involving the United States and Greece. It is easy to say in 1934 that most of the "entertainment" that comes over the radio is vile, but the commercialization of radio was held by many thoughtful people, ten years ago, to mark the beginning of a new era of public enlightenment and increased musical appreciation. Mr. Warren's deprecation of Lanier's appreciation of photography cannot be taken seriously. There is nothing in art lovelier than some of the non-journalistic photography of the present day.

Though no farmer, Lanier had acquired—probably breathed it in with the Southern air of Macon—a knowledge of practical agriculture, and he had from first to last a deep concern for it. The passage from the 1869 commencement address quoted above is specifically in reference to agriculture, though I omitted in quoting the specialized reference because it is plain that Lanier was merely using a special example to illustrate a general truth. Sentences omitted above are: "Experiment as much as you can. Try this and that fertilizer; plant an acre in this grain, an acre in that cotton, an acre in the other vine. . . ."

His little-known but effective early dialect poems are—with a single exception—all descriptive of farmers, and are pleas in behalf of diversification of crops. They are in a sense a poetic counterpart of the editorials of Mr. Joseph Clisby, editor of the Macon *Telegraph and Messenger* (referred to by name in one of the poems), urging the planting of more corn and less cotton, and—as such—propaganda. Lanier's vision of a South economically ruined by over-production of cotton but redeemed by the production of corn (there was not in 1874 as now a corn surplus as well) is expressed in "Corn", a poem indigenous to a Georgia corn-field.

But the agrarian *ideal* is not one of one-crop agriculture. "Corn" suggests an immediate solution for a present evil; it is not a programme for a continuous social development. Proof that Lanier was a wise agrarian must be sought elsewhere. I find it in the very essay, "The New South", that Mr. Tate seems to think so little of. And if I draw entirely from this essay the evidence of Lanier's intelligent agrarianism and ignore possibly contradictory evidence in other essays, such as that called "Retrospects and Prospects", written thirteen years before, it is because it seems to me only fair to accept Lanier's last written and published testament on the South as the testament he meant to leave to us, voiding all others.

The New South, Lanier was careful to state, meant —in distinction from the old—small farming, the development of which "during the last twenty years becomes the notable circumstance of the period". If successful small farming, with each farm thoroughly self-sustaining, is not the agrarian ideal at its purest and best, as stated even in the symposium *I'll Take My Stand*, I know not how to label it.

> Indeed [Lanier wrote] one has only to recall how the connection between marriage and the price of corn is but a crude and partial statement of the intimate relation between politics, social life, morality, art, on the one hand, and the bread-giver earth on the other; one has

only to remember that . . . whatever crop we hope to reap in the future—whether it be a crop of poems, . . . of constitutional safeguards, of virtuous behaviors, . . . —we have got to bring it out of the ground with palpable ploughs and with plain farmer's forethought; in order to see that a vital revolution in the farming economy of the South . . . is the one substantial fact upon which a really new South can be predicated.

It is interesting, too, that Lanier viewed with alarm the large-scale farming of the Northwest—industrialized farming—which even the New Agrarians must feel is agrarianism betrayed and corrupted. But his fear was based on possibilities, not on actualities: "The evils just now alleged of large farming in the West were necessarily in the way of prophecy," he wrote at the conclusion of his discussion; and Time has in this at least proved his prophecy not a matter of "delusion". There is an interesting parallelism between Lanier's statement that "large farming is not farming at all. It is mining for wheat", and Mr. Lytle's pertinent remark that "a farm is not a place to grow wealthy; it is a place to grow corn".

Indeed, Lanier's essay on the New South would not be out of place in the Agrarian symposium. Certainly it is the ideal of the Agrarians that he expresses in his statement that "on the large farm [with its seasonal over-turn of labour] is no abiding-place; the labourer must move on; life cannot stand still, to settle and clarify". *Settle and clarify!* It is the settled and clarified life, surely, that Mr. Stark Young praises as the aristocratic; and it is the Southern way of life, whether it be agrarian or industrial.

It is something I still fail, after considerable effort, to understand that Mr. Allen Tate could ever once have read "The New South" and stated: "Having convinced himself [in this essay] that the South would become . . . a region of securely rooted small farmers, [Lanier] was at liberty to misunderstand the social and economic significance of the Civil War, and to flatter the industrial capitalism of the North in . . . '[The] Psalm of the West'." The poem, of course, antedates the essay by four years, though Mr. Tate ignores that. He ignores also, and more regrettably, that in the essay Lanier characterizes large farming as manufacturing, points out the evils of it, and expresses his fine "indignation" against it.

Mr. Warren finds inconsistency in Lanier's protest against the domination of Trade and the fact that "he once found it in his heart to approve big corporations because they were 'needed'". What Lanier actually wrote was: "Our republic vitally needs the corporation for the mighty works which only the corporation can do, while it as vitally needs the small farmer for the pure substance of individual and self-reliant manhood which he digs out of the ground, and which, the experience of all peoples would seem to show, must primarily come that way and no other." In their prefatory "Statement of Principles" the contributors to *I'll Take My Stand* declare:

> An agrarian society is hardly one that has no use at all for industries. . . . An agrarian society is one in which agriculture is the leading vocation . . . that becomes the model to which the other forms approach as well as they may. . . . An agrarian régime will be secured readily enough where the superfluous industries are not allowed to rise against it.

If any other point needs to be laboured to prove Lanier a good agrarian, who should be accepted as such by the apostolic twelve, it is the point that Lanier was sectional, that he saluted proudly the Southern way of life, refused to exchange it for any other way, and rejoiced in his sectionalism. And that, I think, may be proved from his writings and by accounts of his personality. It is not too much to say that by his dignified bearing and his courteous ways, and by the irresistible appeal of his "shining presence" (to quote Lowell's description) he made those Northerners who came to know him think appreciatively of the section that produced him. Long after he was gone, in speaking of him they referred to him always as "the charming Southerner".

In matters touching national problems and affairs, Lanier refused to be sectional (in the derogatory sense of the word) and he deplored, consistently enough, the tendency of editors and critics, Southern as well as Northern, to judge his work, his art, as Southern, sectional work, to be praised or condemned in respect to sectional bias. But Lanier loved the South. He was proud that he was a Southerner. He rejoiced that he was chosen to write the Centennial Cantata "as representative of our dear South". He never lost touch with the South, and specifically with Georgia, whose hills, rivers and marshes he described in his best and best-known poems. Moreover, the essay "The New South" is one-half discussion of large farming and its attendant evils, and one-half enthusiastic report on the beneficent results of fifteen years of small farming in Georgia, with the briefest mention of one other Southern state, Mississippi. It ends with a lyrical account of life in "this gracious land", "that ample stretch of generous soil, where the Appalachian ruggednesses calm themselves into pleasant hills before dying quite away into the sea-board levels", that recalls forcibly an earlier if less effective account of this same land.

The earlier account is to be found in an uncollected and practically unknown poem, "The Homestead", which Lanier published in 1871 (while he was still reading law, and before his literary, his public career, had yet really begun) in a paper called, happily enough, *The Southern Farm and Home.* In this poem the State of Georgia speaks, announcing fundamental principles of social living of which New Agrarians and New Dealers alike must approve.

I will no man shall homeless be,
I will no weeping wife shall flee
From shadow of her own roof-tree
   Forth driven by hard neighbor.

I know the large sweet sanctities
That grow in homes, and unto these
I add the might of my decrees
   To make the home-strength stronger;

To foster and confirm the place
Where Birth hath glory, Life hath grace
And Death hath smiles upon his face
   When Life hath grace no longer.

Instructions are then given for the planting of various fruits, grains, vines, and vegetables, because

Lean Hunger starves with plenteous fright;
Want dies, death-stricken with delight;

And Crime slinks back into his night;
Where Plenty rides proud prancing.

That the ideas of the poem are superior to the expression is of course not to be gainsaid.

For Southern agrarians, for even two of them, to attack Lanier as a poet (and by poet I do not here mean versifier but, in Lanier's own conception of the poet's function, leader of men) is one of the curious, unexpected things that happen to disturb one's sense of a settled and clarified order. Dr. William S. Knickerbocker, of Sewanee, writing some several months before either Mr. Tate or Mr. Warren published his attack on Lanier, stated that Lanier's

> agrarian plea for the diversified small farm anticipated by fifty years the gospel of the Southern "agrarians" of Nashville like Messrs. Ransom, Tate, Davidson, and Lytle. Though the "fire-eating" regionalism of *I'll Take My Stand* may not be found in the courteous but manly revolt of Lanier the rest of the agrarian program may be found in his writings. Lanier was not opposing "industrialism" any more than Ruskin, his contemporary, was; he vigorously opposed the exploiting of industrialism and the competitive element of capitalism. What he urged in agriculture has in great measure come to pass; our problems may not be found in him because our economic system is different; but we may find in him the tone of courtesy, the imaginative sympathy and love of beauty, which are marks of the civilized and refined person.

To agreement with Dr. Knickerbocker a close examination of Lanier's essay and *I'll Take My Stand* compels us. That Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren should have revealed so unpredictable an attitude toward

Lanier—chief glory, in poetry, of the South they celebrate—is to be explained, if we grant them sincerity in their attitude, by their failure to realize that the problems of the 1930's and of the 1870's are not identical. Their excessive and defiant sectionalism drives them, though by curious, precious, and tenuous illogicality, to the conclusion that Lanier, striving to be national in the large and important sense of the word, could not have remained Southern, and that in praising nationalism he was actually praising Northern capitalistic industrialism. Lanier repeatedly pointed out the evils and dangers inherent in capitalistic industrialism. Messrs. Warren and Tate, seeing the destruction these evils have accomplished, condemn Lanier for not rejecting industrialism absolutely (though they apparently do not do so themselves)—*before the evils had proved themselves not merely inherent but potent.* As well condemn him for advocating small farming because, as Mr. John Crowe Ransom regretfully states, the small farms into which the Southern plantations were often broken after the war "have yielded less and less of a living".

One only of the twelve contributors to *I'll Take My Stand* even so much as mentioned Lanier in his contribution to the agrarian symposium, and it is significant that he is Herman Clarence Nixon, Professor of Economics at Tulane. His essay, "Whither Southern Economy?", contains three references to Lanier. One reference, it is true, is merely in course of quotation of Lanier's somewhat Emersonian remark that "small minds love to bring large news, and failing a load, will make one". But Professor Nixon quotes Lanier's definition that "The New South" means small farming with approval, at least with approval of the definition as a statement of historic fact in 1880—which is all one can properly ask that it be; and he points out that Lanier's use of the phrase, "New South", was different both from that of Henry Grady and that of W. D. Kelley, and in no wise meant an industrialized South. One feels that Professor Nixon, at least, recognizes Lanier's one ambitious excursion into the field of economic investigation as sound and conclusive, however Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren—poets *primo*, not economists—may feel about it.

So we come to the conclusion that Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren are poor critics of the social order, as being unable to recognize correct social interpretation or to hear sympathetically a social plea so nearly their own; and we re-read with new scepticism their essays on the social order, in behalf of the agrarian way, wondering if they have interpreted other matters correctly, and being less easily moved to acceptance of the conclusions they present so persuasively.

And if a body of doctrine is to be judged by its leaders, we reject, accordingly, the new Southern agrarianism, the expounders of which reject so boldly, so boastingly, the courteous, vigorous plea of a leader of a half-century ago. But agrarianism, as a way of life, is superior to and distinct from the shortcomings of any would-be exemplifiers of it, as it is superior to sectional interpretation of it. Mr. Tate calls Lanier's "a commonplace and confused mind" and his poetry "muddy, pretentious, and false". Mr. Warren calls Lanier blind, his poetry "a vulgar and naïve version" of the poetry of the earlier romantics and the contemporary Victorians. An impartial, open-minded examination of his works and his life should convince one, however, that these are harsh and unfair adjectives to apply to Lanier.

If a civilization is to be judged by its embodiment in individuals, individuals, in turn, are to be judged in respect to their appreciation—their realization and their revelation—of the civilization which nurtured them. Whatever may be said against Lanier's writings on themes not strictly patriotic (though sensitive and capable poets, like Stephen Vincent Benét and the late Robert Bridges, have spoken in praise of his poetry), his appreciations, in verse and prose, of America—"dear land of all my love"—and of Georgia —"my Georgia"—are generous, sincere, and moving, and reveal in the singer a character of tremendous appeal. They entitle him, moreover, to the respect and courteous consideration of all who love the American spirit, in its larger national manifestations, or in its narrower sectional manifestations—especially its manifestation as life settled and clarified, lived graciously in an aristocratically provincial agrarian society.

[*A reply to this article, by Mr. John Crowe Ransom, follows.*]

Hearts and Heads

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

IN THE foregoing article Mr. Starke objects to the critical opinions of Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren, and I suppose I have nothing to do with that. If they do not choose to reply, savage though he understands them to be, it must devolve upon the reader to tell why; to examine the original essays, and now his exceptions, and to determine whether it is because they find themselves without a rebuttal or do not think they require one.

If I intrude upon the controversy, it is not in order to call for fair play between the parties, in which I am comparatively uninterested, but because Mr. Starke has now done a bold and interesting thing: he has shifted suddenly the axis of discussion, and taken the matter of Sidney Lanier quite out of the realm of mere literary criticism. He inquires, and he makes assertions, about the relation of Sidney Lanier to the former South, and the present South, as a public man, as perhaps an "agrarian". I think both Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren would have liked to undertake these topics, if they had not been confined by the canons of the literary review. They were reviewing a biography of Lanier, which offered opinions about Lanier's verse, and Lanier's general ideas; they examined the opinions, with the result that they are said to have "attacked" Lanier; and waiving their attack on Lanier's poetry, Mr. Starke writes an article to bear out the title, "The Agrarians Deny a Leader". It probably did not occur to them that in studying Lanier they were handling their natural leader. Primarily, and principally, he is not their kind of leader in poetry, though he was a Southerner, and they confess that they are Southerners. Incidentally, he is not their leader in economic and philosophical ideas, but then there must be few historians who would try to establish his importance in those fields as anybody's leader. Now there is almost as much satisfaction in having a leader as in having a doctrine, and I agree that Southern agrarians should reject the candidates with reluctance. They must reject the candidate if he is not equal to the doctrine.

I

Lanier was a Georgian; he fought on the Confederate side in the Civil War, and lived just through Reconstruction; and his attitude to the war, to the enemy, to the nation, to the Southern poet's function, was frequently lacking in critical intelligence and in dignity.

In the military career of Sidney Lanier, so far as we see it in Mr. Starke's account, we may find plenty of courage and suffering, and we may obtain the impression of a great deal of flute-playing and lightheartedness and—if the psychologist will permit—intellectual insensibility. What was the war about? It was popularly thought to be about slavery, but Lanier had no particular interest in slavery pro or con. He was temperamentally one of the Platonists, in love with big abstract ideas, and he was probably on the point of conceiving a grand attachment for the nation—for he did conceive one a little later under the most unfavourable circumstances—and was disturbed at the thought of disunion. But when Alexander Stephens joined the Confederate Government it was all the evidence he needed; he joined the Confederate army. He was the perfect private, without a thought of his own.

He was young—a boy not twenty when he enlisted. But when the war was ended he still had no opinions about it, nor in the course of subsequent years did he seem to acquire any. He came out of the war sickened bodily and mentally, and went dully into a succession of jobs and lean livelihoods in conquered Georgia and Alabama. His resistance was over. He was not sustained by the sense that there was still a fight to make, a community of effort to share. There was not much toughness in him. It may be said that he was born unluckily, into a time and place that required rougher human stuff than his. What he wanted was to play the flute and write verses, but there was little chance for the troubadour in the South then. He wrote characteristically to a Northern friend in 1866: "You are all so alive, up there, and we are all so dead, down here." Dead to the things he liked to do. But that is too petulant to be mistaken for the language in which the leader refers to his people. He would not have accepted agrarians like Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren; why should they accept him?

Later he evolved a curious philosophy of art, which seems to be the rationalization of his personal difficulty: that "the Art of any age will be complementary to the Thought of that Age". In Mr. Starke's paraphrase of his remarks this meant, "In an age of scientific achievement art will be less concerned with reality than with making an escape from it"; and in his own words again, "What more natural than that the spirit of men should call upon it for relief from the pressure and grind of Fact?" And that too is not spoken like a hero.

He did not remain in the South; he got out as soon as he could. He pursued acquaintance and friendship in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, among the Brahmins of Cambridge; he found intermittent employment in Baltimore; he constantly sought publication in Philadelphia and New York. It is impossible to escape the impression that throughout his life he was much too eager for the friendship and praise of the persons he admired; inordinately concerned with seeing his work printed, in the first place, and well received, in the second. He was dependent, like some vaudeville artist, upon the sympathy of an immediate audience, and without the iron that we suppose in the predestinate poet. If he had real creative genius—and he had at least a constant artistic predilection, and a talent, which for Americans of that period ought to count as genius—he paid for it by his temperamental defects. And yet this consideration need not arise if we were permitted to regard him simply as a poet; so that it seems a pity that Mr. Starke insists upon our seeing him also as a strong personality, as a Southern and agrarian leader.

Now it may be that Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren, in their strict examination of his verses, do not give Lanier the full benefit of their historical sense. As an American poet of 1875 he could hardly be expected to know as much about poetry as may be known by intelligent poets now, for there have come in our time a vast experimentation and a body of criticism to which he had no access. Furthermore, they may be wrong in asking of him as an occasional economist an understanding of the drift of industrial capitalism equal to that acquired painfully by our own post-War generation; Mr. Starke urges this point against them. But as for Lanier's disinterest in the contemporary realities of his section the case is exactly reversed. It cannot be counted a moral dereliction today if a Southerner, or any American, is content in his attachment to the abstract nation, no longer needs his own roof-tree, and flits easily from place to place within the Union; there is at the most a question of philosophical intuition, or of taste. But the detachment of Lanier, a Southerner under Reconstruction, suggests the obtuseness which is moral. Nationalism had not begun to be one of the stereotyped liberal virtues in Lanier's South, and had no business being one, and Mr. Starke does not realize what a simple anachronism he commits in ascribing it pridefully to his hero.

II

Lanier discovered in himself, and undoubtedly in many Southerners, a certain softness of attitude which may be admired, perhaps, so long as it does not become too determining. It was "love"; at its highest a very fancy Platonic attitude, metaphysical, close to the religious essence, and rising into a rapport with nature and man; but in practice a temper that found it too painful to cherish resentment, and a poor thing for the South when its interest lay in maintaining against tyranny its own particularity.

It is interesting to imagine that the ideology of Lanier, whose thought tended always to be in terms of love and brotherhood, has a common source with that of Woodrow Wilson, the nephew of his favourite college teacher at Presbyterian Oglethorpe. The sets of circumstance behind the ideas are, however, very different. You may be properly too proud to fight, as Wilson was; when the injury is slight, and the malice not marked. And it is excellent both morally and strategically to talk about peace without victory, provided you do not talk from the losing side. The doctrine of the self-determination of peoples was magnanimous in Wilson when he, with two or three associates, dominated the peoples. But it would have been a remarkable irony if the peoples, anxious to outdo him in politeness, had offered to surrender their identities on behalf of Mr. Wilson's world programme. And so we come to Lanier, publicly forgiving his enemies, and we conclude that it was quixotic, for they had not asked him to, and it was not calculated to improve either his enemies' minds or his own position.

Lanier's love for his enemies was premature; their enmity was still active. The plainest duty of the South happened to be the one which was humanly the easiest: to offer contumacious resistance. The South had lost its national voice, but it was still itself, not having been dismembered or physically destroyed though it had been impaired, and it could not trifle with the risk of disintegration by crumbling. There was the fact that the South was being forcibly reconstructed politically. Behind that was the fact that the South, if and as it should be allowed a normal self-determination within the Union again, would have to fortify its economic and cultural patterns, sapped by siege and disrepute, through the most continuous and self-conscious effort. Nationalism was not an attitude which was open to the South at the moment, and it would be open, when peace did come, only with very steady reservations. But Lanier early became a burning nationalist, asking of the sections not that they, not even that his own, be anything in particular, but only that they be bound together in brotherly love.

Lanier did not have in him a normal degree of the sense of being placed or rooted anywhere. And yet it must be said that there is in him at any moment a natural piety in one sense; a love (nostalgia it amounts to when he is gone from it) for the specific physical nature of his own region. But there is an insufficient sense of the cause of this love: the specific way of living, in the provincial Georgia country. I hope, like Mr. Tate, that this is not too esoteric; I am saying that sensibility to nature is an acquired faculty, and depends on having the right working relation with nature, the right economy, rather than on having tours and picnics.

In his Centennial Ode of 1876 Lanier interpolated a little poem which he had written years before, representing the Civil War as a joust between two noble knights, Heart and Brain. They fight, and Heart is beaten down, but Brain raises him up. The passage ends:

> Heart and Brain! no more be twain;
> Throb and think, one flesh again!

Lo! they weep, they turn, they run;
Lo! they kiss: Love, thou art one!

This little poem is interesting in more ways than one. If it was written, as Mr. Starke shows is possible, as early as 1862, it was not written like a soldier. And given to the world as late as 1876, it was still anticipatory rather than descriptive. Between the war and the Centennial was a long interval in which no reconciliation had occurred; on the contrary, Brain had filled the interval with humiliations for Heart; and Heart had been very surly. If the Centennial anniversary must not pass without some poet's making chivalry out of that disreputable span of history, it was doubly ironical that the burden had to be assumed by a Southern poet, by poor Lanier. Mr. Warren says of these pretty verses that they are not realistic. I do not imagine he means by the word to criticize the representation of ugly modern warfare by a mediaeval tourney, as Mr. Starke seems to think. Poets may prefer the Ptolemaic sword to the Copernican rifle, without altering also the spirit of the occasion; but if they do that, they may be blamed for unrealism, to the extent that the occasion can no longer be identified.

But the two combatants also cannot quite be identified under the symbols of the head and the heart. I judge it was an aspiration of Lanier's that the South should lead the Union in the power of love, and that he should be its poet. As an offset to that claim, or even as a matter of fact, he was probably prepared for the North to lead in brain-power. Whatever may be said about the first of these identifications, the latter, that of the North with brain, is a concession that nobody in the Union today, I imagine, would be so cruel as to exact of a Southerner.

It might be strongly argued, and documented, that Lanier had no great opinion of the comparative Southern intelligence. There was perhaps in him something of a "defeatist complex", to which I have referred under other terms. It appeared in his self-exile from the South to a place where there was life, letters, bright talk, music, and commercial publication. It appears also in his many admirations of the marvels of applied science, which were scarcely to be observed in the Southern heavens. It does not appear anywhere, so far as I can see, that he admired the Southern life for any unique merit. Possibly there was none, and in that event he is absolved. But I suspect his credentials. To him the South must have seemed "backward", to use a more recent phrase; but for his part he always looked forward.

And as to a South pre-eminent in love, and Southerners peculiarly perfected in that virtue, the identification is invidious to the North, and on the whole absurd. The single basis for it lies perhaps in the popular notions about Southern hospitality to strangers, and general Southern politeness. I do not suggest that such myths are devoid of all foundation in facts, but these do not amount to a metaphysic of love. Personally the Southerner tends to be amiable, and perhaps too amiable. Politically he is a very hard customer. The Southerner applies love, if he has it, to his personal and local relations. When it comes to applying love on general principles, and on a big scale, that is, to an abstract humanitarianism, we must look to points North—to the East somewhat, and certainly to the Middle West, to sections that have not had a good chance to develop locale, and the sense of the small community, or sections that have had their chance and lost it. At the moment when the expansive Sidney Lanier was seeking friends in the North, and loving them as hard as they would allow him, many other Southerners were still at home indulging in the only post-war luxury that is given to all the vanquished: hatred. They should have found something better to do. But it was not incumbent upon them to do what he was doing; the Northern friends were scarcely doing that. Students in moral philosophy find no prettier puzzle to work at than the question of what would remain to human life if it were actuated by perfect altruism. But it is only an academic puzzle, for the most part; biology does not permit us to victimize ourselves as much as we might like. Love could not solve the problems of the South in Lanier's day; no more than its problems today.

III

Mr. Starke, in the article, makes it his chief contention that Lanier was a good agrarian, in the sense in which Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren are publicly known to be agrarians, in the sense in which Mr. Starke intimates that he himself is an agrarian.

There are evidently varieties of agrarians. There are the hard and the soft; there are the thoroughgoing and those up to a certain point; the philosophic and the economic; the Southern and the general; the open and the secret; the baptized and the unbaptized.

I do not know whether Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren consider that there is a canonical or regular variety of agrarians who take precedence over the rest, and pass upon orthodoxy. I presume not. If they do, they know that they belong to this official group, whom Mr. Starke refers to as the apostolic twelve, and who would appear to have initiated the recent renascence of agrarians, so far as these have depended upon a doctrinal agitation. But I do not think they would claim for their group plenary inspiration in the doctrine, special rights by way of discovery, or any official power. I suppose they would consider half-way agrarians as better than no agrarians, and be glad to see good doctrine spreading widely if not without some dilution. The tone of their remarks upon Lanier's agrarianism, or more likely his non-agrarianism, since they do not classify it by name, is the tone of appealing to reason rather than authority.

Measured by this standard, Lanier did not think with any exceptional insight into the matter. He was as a child in agrarianism; or as a member of the esoteric order who has taken the seventh or the fourteenth out of thirty-three degrees of advancement.

There is something invincible in the champion of a poet who, not assenting to the unfavourable report that has been received upon his poetry, demands that he be examined upon his agrarianism. But it can be easily done. Things were different in this poet's time from what they are today, as Mr. Starke reminds us, and we could hardly expect him to know the answers that we would like. But it may be readily said that Lanier showed at one time or another a correct apprehension of some of the obvious evil of industrial capitalism, and of some of the benefit of agrarian farming.

"He was the first of our poets to cry out against [industrialism] as a deadly blight on life and civilization." The statement is incontrovertible and impressive. And what was the precise trouble with industrialism, or "Trade", as he liked to call it for its greater ignominy? There is this sort of thing in the "Symphony":

> And ever Love hears the poor-folks' crying,
> And ever Love hears the women's sighing . . .

and this sort of thing, with more specification:

> But, oh, the poor! the poor! the poor!
> That stand by the inward-opening door
> Trade's hand doth tighten ever more,
> And sigh their monstrous foul-air sigh
> For the outside hills of Liberty,
> Where Nature spreads her wild blue sky
> For Art to make into melody!

And there is this from a letter about the novel which he never lived to write, defining its central thesis:

> . . . it is *now* the *gentleman* who must arise and overthrow *Trade*. That Chivalry . . . which does not depend upon birth but which is a revelation from God, of justice, of fair dealing, of scorn of mean advantages; which contemns the selling of stock which one *knows* is going to fall to a man who *believes* it is going to rise as much as it would contemn any other form of rascality or of injustice or of manners:—it is this which must in these latter days organize its insurrections and burn up every one of the cunning moral castles from which Trade sends out its forays upon the conscience of modern society.

These passages are typical of Lanier on the industrial society, and the touch is only that of the moralist in economics. We gather that Trade is the enemy of chivalry and even of common honesty; and that the great fortunes, as they are acquired under the forms of capitalistic organization, entail at the other end of the line great destitution; two sound objections, neither an agrarian one. It was doubtless too early to see that dangerous, or possibly that fatal, flaw in the capitalistic system that we have recognized though not cured: its expansive principle, which does not permit of stability, and which secretes idle capital and idle labour at such a rate that periodic breakdowns are inevitable. Lanier was a long way behind the modern critics of industrial capitalism, but he was also a long way behind Marx. His objections are not precisely economic ones.

And what did he propose to do about these evils? If he were more explicit in his reflections upon the factory scene in the second bit above, or had other passages on this kind of scene in which he was explicit, the reader would be inclined to construe the argument thus: That the poor should never have entered the inward-opening door to earn a wage but should have remained on the outside hills and farmed them. He does not actually say it; and I believe that it does not occur to him, but that he is saying rather awkwardly that Trade, instead of tightening the door to keep them in for longer hours at smaller pay, should let them out early to go and picnic over the hills, or spend their leisure time in cultural pursuits, et cetera, et cetera. And the grand insurrection which is to rise against Trade in the projected novel is not endowed with any physical character, and is only intended to enforce reforms on the order of "fair play" and "social justice", reforms of the heart rather than of the constitution; obviously a proposition of the sort that today we would call "liberalism", meaning nothing very effectual, and certainly nothing agrarian; an activity for the debating society.

Lanier does not appear to object to the factory system as such; as one that subtracts the dignity from human labour and the aesthetic value from the product. In this respect he is behind Ruskin and Morris, his English analogues; behind them in his economic thought, and far behind them in his uneducated taste. He was a man impressed unduly by mechanical products and the new applications of science. The taste for the mechanical is a taste for the abstract, but the philosophical status of agrarianism is that it is opposed to abstraction, and as an artist Lanier should have seen that his love of the Platonic abstraction was destructive to his poetry.

And how does he represent the life of the land, which is the positive pole in any agrarianism? Many citations might be made from his verse, but similar citations could be made from most lyric poets; they would not distinguish him. The first subject of poetry is nature, and most poets are agrarians in feeling, and it is useless to attach a doctrinal importance to his songs of the land, or even his song about corn. But there is, in prose, his "New South", upon which Mr. Starke banks heavily, and even a little poem or so with an economic thesis. Lanier had seen both in print and in fact, and had admired, the first reform step taken in the agriculture of the cotton belt: diversification, the substitution of corn for cotton. We in our time have heard and seen more of it, for it has been preached intemperately, and we know that it is good, and that it is not a farmers' panacea. In Lanier's time it meant principally for a long period that a farmer could get more money for his corn than for his cotton; and that is not exactly agrarianism, though agrarians would be sympathetic. But it must be added that at least once, and perhaps we might say occasionally, he put with the idea of corn the idea of subsistence farming, and there we have agrarianism beyond a doubt, perhaps its most pointed essence. Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren should not have overlooked this, though the total exhibit is slight. But subsistence farming was common enough on Southern farms, on small farms generally, in Lanier's time; if it had not been he would have made more of a show with it in the poems. It was the big Western farm which was really revolutionary, with its one money crop and its migrant workers, and it is pleasant to know that Lanier did not approve it.

Lanier's section was confronted with a crisis in its principal means of income, which was agriculture. There was no profit in cotton, but the farmers managed nevertheless; among other things, by trying new money crops, and by continuing the old Southern habit of subsistence farming. The individual farmer could scarcely do otherwise if he cared to keep his head above water; and if they all had done it with energy and intelligence, the farms of the South would never have run down.

Lanier's influence upon Southern agriculture must have been small, and it was certainly, though not consciously, self-contradicting. He wrote admiringly of Georgia landscape and Georgia small farmers, but the example he set was that of leaving Georgia. He was also an uncritical nationalist, and uncritical nationalism was the last thing to be recommended to the South; the national ideal pointed one way and the Southern agrarian ideal pointed the other way. If Lanier was not in a position to see this, nevertheless his section assumed the correct attitude while he apostatized. The section was actuated by the instinct of resistance, as opposed to Lanier's impulse to love; but there was unquestionably abroad in the South some understanding of the political and economic drift of the ruling nationalism. There was a very definite relation between agrarianism and nationalism, which Lanier did not even suspect. And Mr. Starke seems to confess that he too does not grasp the connection even today.

It went like this. At the centre of the Republican government during the Civil War, if we leave out Lincoln, who was fully occupied with conducting the war, was a group of long-sighted men engaged in consecrating the new party to an economic policy to which it has been faithful nearly ever since. This policy had the spread of manufactures in mind, and protective tariffs, and big business, and rich Eastern Republicans. Lincoln scarcely knew what they were about. Upon the end of the war, and Lincoln's assassination, a new problem arose. The pre-war South had opposed tariffs and the growing power of industry; the same South would now certainly oppose Republicanism. The Southern States were ready to come back into the Union, but the Republican leaders were not ready to receive them. Under the constitution the slaves had counted only three-fifths of their actual number for the purpose of determining representation in Congress, but now the slaves were free men and citizens, and the old South would return to Washington with a larger delegation than ever. The Reconstruction measures were designed to prevent this inconvenience; not so much a piece of malice as a piece of greedy economic planning. They were to break up the control of the former masters in the South, and bring to Congress elected Republican carpet-baggers and blacks. They failed, though not because of any special virtue in the Southern whites; such measures could not have succeeded against any section, over the local opposition, and the nausea of Democrats and many others in the North. They came to their ignominious conclusion, if we wish to dramatize it in a single event, when the Republicans had to trade to the Democrats the concession of withdrawing the Federal soldiers from Southern soil in return for declaring Hayes duly elected as President of the United States.

The Reconstruction measures failed, but not until the Republicans had consolidated their power and won the country to their industrial programme. The South therefore did not recover its power; agrarian farming came into great disrepute. Now it is not impossible for two economies to flourish side by side, such as agrarianism and industrialism; the hope of agrarians today is that the industrial section of American society, which agrarianism cannot destroy, though it may destroy itself, will have a neighbour in the person of an agrarian section, sure of its own aims and not overly impressed with all the banking, the buying, and the speeding that it sees. But it is difficult; or it has been difficult, and was difficult let us say at the turn of the century, when the progress of industrialism was prodigious and its benefits could not be praised extravagantly enough. There was no sufficient reason for the decay of Southern farming; but many farmers were leaving for the large cities, as Lanier had done, and others were trying to emulate the big Western farmers in risking everything for money, as Lanier had advised them not to do, and the rest lost their self-respect and conformed to the pattern of shiftlessness which was publicly assigned to them. The South began to industrialize, and on the farms to abandon the agrarian way. But there still remains on the Southern land the ghost of the agrarian tradition.

All this is why the South is the most fertile field in the Union for the agrarian recovery; it is why an agrarian policy in the South may be a policy with more mixed and more powerful motives than elsewhere; it is why the apostolic agrarians address themselves to their local public in terms that seem to innocent readers at a distance "to appeal to sectional prejudice"; and it is why Sidney Lanier, though he might have devoted his life to the elucidation of pure agrarian theory, must have failed strategically for not being able to tell its friends from its enemies.

Parliament and Monarchy

Hilaire Belloc

It is a matter of mere observation that parliaments have gone through various degrees of collapse lately all over the world. Meanwhile there seems to have been no attempt, in England at least, to explain why this should be so. Yet the question is worth answering because Parliament is in England the central national institution. It is still that, even in its present stage of decay; and it is of practical importance to ask oneself the nature of a disease which has attacked one's central political institution, just as it is of importance to discover the nature of a disease that has attacked one's heart.

As a preliminary to such an enquiry, we first note that the degrees in the collapse of parliaments, and even the character of the collapse, differ with different communities. In England, the parliament still functions, outwardly, on its old lines, and is still universally accepted as the chief traditional institution of the country. In France, the parliament still works, though in a lame and halting fashion, thoroughly despised and by no one regarded as national. Among the Germans, and in Italy, parliaments in the sense in which we are using that term here have been knocked on the head, and are certainly not regretted.

Among the Poles a parliament still exists, but it is overshadowed by personal power. In the lesser states it works, again with very different degrees of success; but nowhere is it respected.

In comparing the various communities to which these experiences attach, we notice one very important point to begin with. The only country in which a parliament still functions with some regularity and at any rate the externals of regard and power is Britain; and Britain is precisely the one and only country in Europe which is still nourished in some degree by the aristocratic spirit.

The second point we notice is equally important. Where parliaments have been knocked on the head, they have been knocked on the head in the name of the community as a whole. What has replaced them has been an appeal to the mass: the populace in its corporate capacity. In other words, where parliaments have been got rid of they have been got rid of because they did not correspond to the will of the whole people desiring to express itself in corporate fashion under a sense of equality; while, where they have been preserved with some respect—and this country is the only one in which they have so been preserved, that is, not tolerated and despised but maintained and still regarded—this sense of equality is at the weakest.

The more one looks into the phenomenon, and the more closely one examines it, the more it is borne in upon one that the complaint against parliaments is that they are not representative; and since this truth sounds paradoxical it must be explained and expanded.

The Greeks have taught us in politics as in everything else, and they divided states into three categories, which are the commonplaces of political discussion, as when one talks of a monarchical form of government, a democratic form, et cetera.

But there is another analysis of the state which, for the purpose of understanding the modern breakdown of parliaments, is more useful; it is a division of human societies into the Egalitarian and the Aristocratic. I mean by the "Aristocratic State", not a state in which there is a superior class, for that would be true of every state of any size and ancient tradition; nor do I mean a state in which "the best" govern: I mean a state in which a governing class is accepted by the community as a natural organ of control. Aristocracy in this sense is from below, and the essence of it is not the acquiescence in, but the positive appetite for, the rule of a Gentry by the rest of the community. The "Egalitarian State", on the other hand, is a state in which the average citizen is occupied with his citizenship, thinks of other citizens as his equals in this respect, and dislikes the idea of a limited class, or, at any rate, of a comparatively small class, managing public affairs for him.

When the Egalitarian State is very small, it can exist as a democracy; that is, so long as it is not too large for the citizens to come together in a public meeting and decide there upon any change in the customs. But in states of any great size, the egalitarian feeling must always express itself in the form of active monarchy. The power of the monarchy will always be limited by custom; no monarchy, however strong, could arbitrarily change the bulk of custom; and in any monarchy, however absolute, custom has organs for its expression. But the distinction lies between the Egalitarian State—which, if it is large, demands headship under one man who shall incarnate the community and be, as it were, the representative citizen of all—and the Aristocratic State, in which a class, regarded by the rest of the community as their superior, undertakes the function of government.

Of course, as in all other generalizations upon the nature of society, we find in practice only mixed examples. No state is an ideal monarchy, and no state is an ideal Aristocratic State. But states fall, if they are of any size, into one of the two groups; and of the two, the Aristocratic State is far the rarest. England was until lately the best modern example; Venice was the best mediaeval example; and probably Carthage was the best example in antiquity.

There are many characteristics of the Aristocratic State by which you may know it, as, for instance, that public servants are revered instead of being suspected. But the prime underlying condition which makes it possible to have an Aristocratic State at all, is the acceptance of oligarchy. To the citizen of the Egalitarian State oligarchy is odious and even intolerable. To a citizen of the Aristocratic State it seems normal and is welcomed and supported. Thus one of the most illuminating phrases in English political history is that of the first Lord Clarendon, the historian of the Great Rebellion, where he says that in matters of great moment the English like to leave the decision "to a few". That instinct is the very soul of aristocracy, which has also been described as the most stable but the basest of human governments.

When we have appreciated this, we understand why parliaments fail in most communities and succeed in some few others. The reason is that parliaments are oligarchies. They are comparatively small bodies of men, self-renewing and somewhat separate from the mass of the community. Where people like oligarchy, they will like these continuous bodies called parliaments, in which the same personalities reappear and their sons after them; in which privilege is enjoyed, and which express their own high opinion of themselves and the regard in which they are held by outsiders, through an elaborate ritual and pomp which, to the egalitarian citizen, appears grotesque, save where it is attached to the monarch.

Parliaments are essentially oligarchies, and as aristocracy is by definition government by an accepted oligarchy, the aristocratic idea fits in with parliaments, while the egalitarian idea is at issue with them.

A parliament, of course, like a monarch, or, indeed, government of any kind which has any desire to live, must have some representative character about it. That tincture is given to parliaments in a dead mechanical fashion by submitting membership to popular election. The members of the various parliaments which have sprung up since the French Revolution have all gone through the form of being elected by a more or less extended popular vote. But the word "elected" is ambiguous. The parliament is not chosen as one chooses a hat, by selection, and after considering alternatives; its members are elected only in the sense that votes are cast to decide according to some arbitrary rule (a majority of all adult males, or of all adult males and females or of such few as possess so much property, or of such as may have come to the polls, et cetera) whether one parliamentarian or another shall be returned to parliament. There is and can be no spontaneous action by the populace as a whole, nor even by the populace of one locality; for corporate action of that sort is not normal to man. Save perhaps in moments of extreme excitement, and these very rare, the initiative of deciding which of two individuals, or of half a dozen at the most, shall be presented to the voters, must lie with a caucus, that is, a parliamentary organization of some sort; and the tendency will always be for the various candidates to be as much of one type as possible: the parliamentary type.

In the same way the questions submitted for decision can never be, save in the rarest moments of excitement, questions arising spontaneously from the desires of the people. Thus for many years in England, when the one great question on which the English people were anxious was the question of wages, they were bidden vote for or against a thing called Home Rule. In France, where the desires of the people are concerned with maintaining property and currency, resisting invasion, and increasing their material well-being, they had for many years to vote on whether they did or did not like monks and priests. As an instrument for representing the popular will, it would be difficult to conceive anything less suited than a body of some hundreds of men, each of whom is concerned with maintaining himself in parliament by getting on with the caucus, and presenting the nation as a mosaic of what are ironically called "constituencies".

But if what you are after is a senate, a revered oligarchy, then this way of collecting it will work as well as any other. But it would also work if collected by heredity, or in a number of other natural ways, and be equally successful. What you cannot possibly get by such a method, never have got, and never will get, is a mirror of the average citizen and the expression of his will.

Now throughout the world it is the instinctive appreciation of these truths which has brought parliaments into contempt wherever they seriously attempt to pose as The People. They are not The People, and never can be The People. They are, and must always be, little oligarchies of professional politicians. But when you have an Aristocratic State the parliamentarians will be of the sort, as a rule, which their fellow citizens like to see set above them. They will form an oligarchy, of course; but an oligarchy the power of which is welcomed by its subjects.

The practical concern we have in Britain with plain truths of this sort and their contrast with the false phrases about "democracy", "representation", and the rest of it, in connection with parliaments, is that, as the aristocratic spirit declines, parliament will cease to work here as it has ceased to work everywhere else.

That the old aristocratic spirit, which was still so vigorous only fifty years ago, is now declining in England, there is no doubt. Whether we rejoice or mourn at the phenomenon, it must be accepted as certain that the decline is there, and that it is becoming more and more apparent every day.

The causes of this are so many and so intertwined, and so often include an effect as well as a cause, that they can only be imperfectly judged. But I would suggest, among others: (1) the agglomeration of the English people in great towns, where no aristocratic class is distinguishable (where, as the phrase goes, "They don't know a gentleman when they see him"); (2) the instability of modern wealth; (3) the habit of continual and rapid travel; (4) the huge blunder made in assimilating the taxation of land to the taxation of stocks and shares; (5) the breakdown of agricultural life, where men could test by personal contact the members of the upper class among them. To these five I would add what seems to be the strongest cause of all: (6) the decline in aristocratic morals among the gentry themselves.

The gentry took to selling themselves three or four decades ago, and no governing class can survive a long-continued process of that kind. They began to accept anyone as their close companion if he were wealthy, no matter how rapidly or basely the wealth had been obtained. They took orders from such men, they entered their service, they allowed them to purchase public honours and policies. They correspondingly lost touch with culture, the preservation of which lies with the middle sort of income, wherein are bred the writers, artists, and chief thinkers of a community.

As this selling of themselves proceeded the gentry began to lose their characteristic manner. There is a gentlemanly and an ungentlemanly way of swindling, betraying your country, talking English, drinking, and the rest of it; and, though a gentry is ultimately the product of money, yet when the members of a gentry begin to take orders from mere money they lose their essential character. They lose the easy instinct for command, and that sort of aloofness which is at once the moral vice and the political strength of a governing class.

But if this process of rapid decline in the aristocratic spirit of England continues—and there is no sign of a halt in it—Parliament, already failing, will become impossible.

It is customary at the moment to contrast parliaments with despotisms. Men who do not think at all, even use the word "democratic" of parliaments, contrasting tyranny or despotism with a freedom which they suppose—in their astonishing ignorance of foreigners and of the past—to be inseparable from parliaments.

We are not, of course, in the face of any such alternative. Of the indefinite number of institutions compatible with normal freedom in the state, perhaps that which best suits the nature and traditions of European people is an active hereditary monarchy, sustained by, and in some degree limited by, the other great organs of the body politic: the Lawyers' Guild, defining and maintaining custom; local institutions; Universities. There may even co-exist with kingship the remnant of parliament itself. A parliament which was not called upon to govern, but only to veto or to advise, one in which people could take interest, because it would speak for professions, crafts, religions—anything real, as distinguished from the absurdity of "N.W. Muddleborough" or "The Rutland Boroughs"—would be a valuable adjunct and check and counter-balance to the other motive forces of the state. But the chief initiative should still lie with the King.

There you would have a sanction which the ordinary man still feels, and there you would have an institution in no discontinuity with the past. It is but a question of changing proportions, of increasing what is called "the power of the Crown".

We have in England, if we use it in time, this existing organ, an hereditary Crown, which is lacking, in effect, to all other parliamentary systems. A group of wise men acting in collaboration with the man chiefly interested might recover the vitality of that institution to the great advantage of the commonwealth.

One thing is certain. If we go on as we are going now, Parliament can only sink from bad to worse. It is still more respected here than anywhere else; it still has a far firmer basis, and an indefinitely greater surety of continuation than elsewhere. But the contrast between what the English Parliament is today and what it was even so short a while as twenty years ago is remarkable. The contrast between what it is today and what it was forty-odd years ago is startling.

No one, perhaps, is much concerned with saving as it now is the corrupt affair at Westminster; but everyone is concerned with assuring the general balance of the commonwealth, and to effect this everything points to one policy: an increase in the power of the Crown.

A Postscript for Philippa

MY POOR PHILIPPA,

Always remember that you opened these floodgates, that you even went so far as to invite this second deluge by reporting Miss Greer's comments on my last letter, and by asking me if it wasn't perhaps a coincidence that I had found no book to recommend heartily after ten days of intensive fiction-reading. It isn't very graceful of me to insist on your responsibility, I know, but the messages from your English teacher were not entirely reassuring. They were somewhat too suavely couched, for one thing, and whether it was you or she who did the editing is a point of lively curiosity to me. If it was Miss Greer, you must tell her that she need not hesitate to describe me as "reactionary" and "intolerant", and that the more openly she uses such adjectives the surer I will be that I have made myself clear. To tell you the truth, I have a fondness not entirely based on natural perversity for a good many words that arc in disrepute today; in fact I wonder how we are going to get any vigour back into our literature unless we reinstate some of the old words in their original meaning, as well as the contrasts and tensions that they stood for.

You see I am more pleased than not to learn that I have been described as "certainly very conservative", although I wish I might have heard the inflection with which the judgement was pronounced. You were so apologetic about repeating it that it is plain Miss Greer uses "conservative" as an epithet, as do most of our cultural leaders today. Indeed "conservative", "orthodox", "erudite", "womanly", "mystical"—oh, any number of excellent words—are now confined almost entirely to the vocabulary of opprobrium. One grows used to that, but never to some of the conclusions reached by those who are unaccustomed to define their words. Why, for instance, should it be thought that "reading any modern fiction must be martyrdom to one with such inhumanly high standards"? The full joy of reading only comes after standards have been established (let us pass over "inhumanly" and "high"; we both know well enough what Miss Greer means), for then at last one can enjoy a writer's wit without running the danger of feeling that by agreeing to laugh with him one is under an obligation to accept his version of life, and appreciation of a good prose style is no longer a trap precipitating one into an unhealthy philosophy. No; my pleasure in reading has been not one grain lessened since it dawned on me that verisimilitude and verity are as far apart as paste and pearls. It is true that, now I know what I am looking for, I do not always plod on, in an effort to be scrupulously fair, through a book which begins to bore me with the third sentence. That, I should say, is the one great alteration in my reading habits which "inhumanly high standards" have brought about.

I have been incredulous, amused, exasperated, irritated, depressed, outraged, interested, and delighted by the eight novels I am writing to you about, but those are hardly the moods of martyrdom. Of the eight, two seem to me to have some abiding value, and one of those is completely to my taste. But statistics are not what you want, and here is my report.

I began with G. B. Stern's *Summer's Play.** It got first chance because its author, although completely unpredictable, wrote *The Matriarch* and one or two other chronicles of Jewish family life which had real virtues. Occasionally she gives us an atrocity: last year's offering, *Long Lost Father*, was bad beyond belief. This is better, but it is not very good, for Miss Stern continues to fob off ingenuity on us in place of true imagination. When ingenuity grips her, there are no lengths to which she will not go in presenting an incredible tale circumstantially. Not all her wiles will make me believe that the bright children of a family who have lived to see their village degenerate into the cheapest kind of summer watering-place could really come to think that the summer visitors (called by the children "The Augs" because most of them make their appearance in August) have no reality except for the period of their vacation—that they "melt away" when their stay is over.

There is a school, or clique, of writers in New York who say, to such protests, "You're being told about some children who *did* believe—" et cetera. This argument is supposed to be unanswerable. It seems to me less argument than bullying, and a reasonable response is surely "I'm not being told well enough". That "willing suspension of disbelief" which every inveterate reader is anxious to make is never possible throughout this book, and Miss Stern must take the responsibility. Still, it is not important. No one could take this for a significant book, and there is a great deal of incidental amusement in it: much fun at the expense of summer-resorters, much good-heartedness

*SUMMER'S PLAY *by G. B. Stern* (KNOPF. 401 pp. $2.50) towards them slapped in so that no feelings will be hurt, a spectacular (and incredible) murder, and not a real idea in the four-hundred-and-one pages.

Novel No. 2: *Set Free*, by Sylvia Paul Jerman.* You recall that I have admitted that my reading habits have changed in one particular? On page 28 of this book I read that "all along their backs the moonlight lay as thick as nakedness". I sighed, and began to skip. Nor do I think I did the author an injustice. Presumably, having submitted her book for publication, she wished to communicate with readers, but it is an equally fair presumption that she is not looking for readers who are unable to think that nakedness, or any other abstract word, carries an idea of dimension. That automatically bars me from her elect, and, from what I gathered in my hasty survey, the book-jacket sums up the novel more neatly and exactly than I should be able to do: "Candell the banker, who had pride in his job and love for his mistress, Catherine, proud and glamorous and a magnificent mother to his children; Candell's wife, Mary, who kept the use of her heart for Flood Harris even in the villainous dance of his addiction to cocaine; Flood's wife, Amy . . . tormented by lack of money and her passionate love for a man long dead." How nice it would have been, I could not help thinking, if the man long dead could have been Candell the banker. *There* would have been design for you.

You will probably think I am joking, but I took up Vicki Baum's *Falling Star*** with some hope. It is quite true that this writer lapses into more faults per page than most other popular authors. Nevertheless the *Ewige Weibliche* comes to her rescue again and again, and magnificently. She will be as spectacular, as melodramatic, as improbable as she dares; and then some saving feminine grace will overtake her; it is as though her intuitive knowledge that woman is centrally the conserver, the cherisher, the stabilizer far oftener than she is the siren or deceiver always keeps her this side of the absurd, and in the midst of her violence she returns to humanity.

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* SET FREE *by Sylvia Paul Jerman* (SMITH & HAAS. 251 pp. $2.00)

**FALLING STAR *by Vicki Baum* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. 307 pp. $2.00)

But this book shows much less of that feminine common sense than its predecessors. Perhaps because its scene is the Troll Kingdom of Hollywood, or perhaps because Frau Baum worked over a well-known cinema "tragedy of real life", she never gets within miles of her story's heart. And in trying to make her characters composite types she loses the last vestige of illusion, presenting us with blurred and fuzzy photographs looking like no one at all. I am sorry, because I had hoped to demonstrate the virtues of melodrama to you with *Falling Star* as my specimen.

That is the last of the inconsiderable books. I wish I had space to tell you fully why I regard a book like *Such Is My Beloved** as more insidiously corrupting than many a book that goes without scruple after the emotions and senses. It is the story of a young priest who tries to reclaim two irreclaimable street-walkers. He fails, the girls are shipped out of town, the young priest is reproved by his bishop, and falls into melancholia.

* SUCH IS MY BELOVED *by Morley Callaghan* (SCRIBNERS. 288 pp. $2.00)

Now: the average reader will think that Mr. Callaghan has been extraordinarily fair to religion because his hero does not (as is usual in these priest-and-prostitute stories, from *Thaïs* to *Rain*) "fall into sin". Father Dowling is shown as warm-hearted, chivalrous, quixotic to tactlessness, devout, an affectionate son, a loyal friend. Yet he is reproved by authority, his actions circumscribed, and actually made to fall sick from disappointment! If religion through its established representatives can oppress a man of such virtues, what, dozens of voices will be asking in every city in the land, can religion have to offer us?

But, please, "let us discriminate". Do not fall easily, led by your own warm-heartedness, into the error of Mr. Callaghan and his admirers. Father Dowling was being reprehended, not for devoutness, not for loyalty, not for love of sinners, but for lack of prudence. "Oh, prudence!" you will say in disgust, since this is just such a word as those I spoke of earlier, a good word which has fallen on evil days, and which is now taken to mean a petty, niggling, self-regarding caution. Imagine anyone's praying for the virtue, or "habit", of prudence! Yet your contempt is based on a misapprehension, and prudence is none the less a virtue for being wrongly defined by an uninstructed generation.

By the time I had come to the end of the novel I found myself respecting the bishop more than I loved Father Dowling, and the "big scene" between the two men solidified my respect. For the young priest was not only imprudent, he was a confused thinker. Do you see what is wrong with this passage, and if not will you show it to Miss Greer and ask her to point it out to you? The bishop says, in the course of his interview with the priest, "I should imagine the notion of prostitution alone would make you sick with disgust". To which Father Dowling replies: "If I start hating prostitutes where am I going to stop?" On considering the matter perhaps it will be safer to be explicit here even at the risk of sounding condescending, for there is every evidence that Mr. Callaghan thinks that Father Dowling made a point, and his publishers surely do: they quote from this scene to give prospective purchasers the essence of the book. And from what you tell me of your teacher I should not be surprised to hear that she, too, considered this retort a fair one. That's as may be; the thing to notice is that Father Dowling's reply does not touch the bishop's comment at any point: the priest was not for one moment being exhorted to hate prostitutes. If I had been his bishop I should have sent Father Dowling back to the Seminary and kept him there till he mastered his Logic.

Nevertheless Mr. Callaghan is a good writer, and his simple, clear, direct pages are a joy. I am one of those Pharisees who can get a great deal too much information about the home-life of street-walkers in less than two pages, but for the pleasure of reading untortured English prose I read most of *Such Is My Beloved.*

Coming to *Frost in May** I come to a serious problem. How can I, even in a very long letter, make you sympathize with my stand when I say that here is a book in lovely English, full of humour and delicate observation—and that I wish it had never been

* FROST IN MAY *by Antonia White* (VIKING. 267 pp. $2.50)

written? This is the story of a little girl whose father, in the first zeal of his conversion to Catholicism, sends her to a convent-school where the rule is very strict, the sisters unwearying in their vigilance. The child, born outside the tradition in which she is being educated, never feels fully at ease; and toward the end of her stay she is discovered to have written a few chapters of a sensational novel (in which all the characters were later to be converted), and is sent away for that indiscretion. Blighted, the title obviously indicates.

It is my custom (let me recommend it to you) to begin each book without looking at the excerpts from press-notices which may be on the cover. When I looked to see what English reviewers had thought I was startled, truly, to see that I had drawn all the wrong conclusions. I had thought, "Since adolescence is always a time of such intensities, of molehill-mountains and teapot-tempests, how fortunate that some children can have their crises turn on matters of real importance". To the end I went on feeling so, remembering young agonies about silk dresses and hair-ribbons hardly less dreadful than these fictional agonies, but with no aftermath of positive value. The tragic title could not overpower me, since I knew I sat reading the story of Antonia White (although she was transparently calling her heroine Fernanda Grey) who was an excellent writer, plainly the better for the discipline she had undergone in a school which must have been very like the Convent of the Five Wounds.

Knowing this, it was impossible to think of *Frost in May* as a representation of the full truth. It is written with a nice objectiveness, but the detachment is, one fears, an imitation of detachment. Unfortunately the imitation is so good, the book so skillfully done, that many readers will overlook the evidence right there in their hands that Fernanda Grey was not ruined by her early experience. They will grow indignant over sensitive children wrecked by harsh discipline, and some of them will agitate to overthrow all discipline in education. What is graver still, the novel will give weapons to every non-Christian in the endless war that is waged against Christianity. The end result of such a book as this, and of *Such Is My Beloved*, is to undermine respect for Christianity, and so ultimately for all religion.

German Family,* with its innocent airs, is an outrage. Here is as bald an example of false simplification as you will find in a year. Real simplification, removing the extraneous, casual, and irrelevant material from a story (except for the amount needed to give the illusion of reality), is always the task of the artist. But suppressing relevant and necessary material in order to gain an unwarranted effect is the propagandist's trick.

An English mother and daughter marry German Jews at the close of the War. There is not one word about the difficulties which always attend an interracial marriage, no hint that the Jewish families involved were anything but overjoyed at the alliances with Christians. There is a great deal of emphasis on the fact that these Jews, while proud of their race, are no longer bigots in their religion, and the young English mother has her Jewish husband's child baptized—oh, just *because*, you know—all those trivial vestiges of ritual are of no importance between real human beings! On the contrary, you are given to understand that if anti-Semitism had not sprung full-armed from the head of Hitler not one cloud would have appeared on the horizons of these lavishly intermingled marriages.

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* GERMAN FAMILY *by L. C. N. Stone* (BOBBS-MERRILL. 345 pp. $2.50)

As the book goes on you realize with some consternation that in spite of all this understanding and goodwill between the races every villain in the book (and it bristles with villains) is a Christian and every Jew is without exception good, loyal, gentle, patient, and loving. Towards the end this plea for the continuance of brotherly love becomes uproariously funny, and as hitherto friendly Christians desert life-long companions, seduce pure Jewish girls, kick Jewish dogs, carry away Jewish children, and are met almost invariably with forbearance and tenderness, frail human nature rebels and shouts with laughter. But *German Family* is no laughing matter, and I hope that every Jew with pride in his race and his religion will treat this sick and sycophantic book as the treachery it is.

To turn from this to *The Unforgotten Prisoner** is to give Mr. Hutchinson's book about strain and loyalty between two cultures—this time genuinely German and English—an advantage which it does not need. For while this book is by no means so good as his first, *The Answering Glory*, being far too long, too diffuse in the middle, and too confusing in its leaps between first-person recounting and third-person narration, it is, as I suspect this author's books will

* THE UNFORGOTTEN PRISONER *by R. C. Hutchinson* (FARRAR & RINEHART. 564 pp. $2.75)

always be, about fully human characters. There is one whopping coincidence in it, but it did not bother me at all: the narrator of the book, who was responsible for breaking up a marriage between his brother and a German girl when she is already with child, is later the commander of a company which must shoot his nephew's step-father as a spy.

But "responsible", in Mr. Hutchinson's vocabulary, means what it should mean. Becoming aware of the injustice he has perpetrated, the hero hunts long and arduously for his nephew, gets him at last into his own home—after the child has nearly lost his mind from terror, cruelty, and starvation in post-War Germany—does all he can to retrieve his error, and at last lets the boy make his own choice of lives; and Klaus chooses to go back to Germany. The effect of the book is tonic and bracing, in spite of Mr. Hutchinson's too conscientious retailing of horrors in the central section.

Now at last I come to the book which I liked completely. It is *The Flowering Thorn.** Miss Sharp's first novel, *Fanfare for Tin Trumpets*, was hardly better than very clever; but it was fresh and witty, and I foresaw two hours' pleasure at least from any book of hers. I could hardly have been prepared for a novel in which approval and laughter should attend every paragraph. I also have the rare joy of feeling almost complacently triumphant: Miss Sharp proves for me that a novel can be contemporary, light, possibly ephemeral, and still sound to the core.

She takes a young Londoner, a girl, at a moment of dissatisfaction with her casual life and comrades.

*THE FLOWERING THORN *by Margery Sharp* (PUTNAM. 311 pp. $2.50)

The dissatisfaction is soundly motivated. Lesley sees a man whom she could love, and because he is busy, happy, and ambitious, the artificial smartness of her group means nothing to him. The next day, rebellious, unhappy, contemptuous of herself, she volunteers—simply to keep on shocking the bourgeois—to adopt a "problem-child" who has been left on her aunt's hands by the death of a servant.

Her shocker has far-flung consequences. She cannot support the child and herself in London on her income, so she is forced to go to the country. She does not dissolve in sentimental adoration of the inconvenient baby, but she grows to respect and like him. She has a little old servant, some animals, a garden, and, little by little, relations here and there with the people of the countryside. About half-way through the novel, Lesley's situation—Lesley, who had lived in stark loneliness in a smart apartment building "with a waiting-list as long as Deuteronomy"—is summed up like this:

> All through the summer Lesley's household consolidated itself. It now included, besides Patrick, Mrs. Sprigg, and Pincher, a fine ginger cat who was sometimes called Alice; and of this tiny universe—as variously inhabited, for all its size, as the island in *The Tempest*—Lesley herself was the natural and undisputed centre. Within it, whatever she said or did was of extreme importance: goddess-like in her meanest activities, she dispensed food, favour, justice, and protection. She had scraps for a dog, milk for a cat, bread for a child, a wage for an old woman: she had a roof and a fire and a door to shut or open. She was beginning to be beloved, and she was already essential.

Do you suppose a woman exists who would not find that situation enviable? The one element lacking in that summary of a good life is promised in the last pages. I hope you will like *The Flowering Thorn.* When I say that possibly it is ephemeral I mean no disparagement. I think, I even hope, that the strained bright artificiality of our period will pass like a dream, and that in a few years the records of the way we acted in these twenty years after the close of the War will seem so improbable, so fantastic, so senseless, that they will be impossible to read. Maybe not; the Restoration was also a fantastic period in England, and we still read, amused but incredulous, of the ways of Millamant. But a Congreve was closer than a Coward in time, if not in spirit, to a period of true culture; so perhaps most of the books about and by the Bright Young People will have to die. May they rest in peace! But I think I will keep *The Flowering Thorn* on my shelves to show my grandchildren how good a light novel of my age could be.

Your devoted godmother,

DOROTHEA BRANDE

American Art and Western Culture

E. P. Richardson

THE study of the arts of sculpture, architecture, and painting in the United States can hardly be said to have begun: the ground is still encumbered by problems which belong to the approach to criticism rather than to the examination of quality, and chief among them is the problem of the Americanism of art. For a hundred and fifty years American democracy has been asking for a native American art. It is still asking. There has been art in America, indeed, for three hundred years; but the demand is, not that there should be art in America, but that we have an art wholly our own, clearly different from European arts.

The Museum of Modern Art, for instance, recently held a survey-exhibit of the painting of sixteen American cities, in a praiseworthy attempt to show that the arts of the country were not wholly confined to New York. The review appearing in the *New York Times* was written in a tone of disappointment at the lack of a native development. As a horrible example it pointed to an artist, born on a ranch in Montana, who produced a pastiche of the Italo-Parisian painter Chitico. A Pittsburgh artist who painted steel mills was held to have introduced a native note. In point of quality, both paintings were equally meaningless. This was overlooked in the search for a native touch.

A worse form of the same attitude is the down-with-the-dirty-foreigner attitude which is becoming more and more prevalent in this country. A news-magazine of art recently contained this specimen of vulgar provincialism:

> The newly formed National Commission to advance American art, whose purpose is to call the attention of Americans to the qualities of their native artists, continued its first vigorous onslaught on foreign art preference by publicly "indicting" Dartmouth College for the employment of the Mexican modernist, José Clemente Orozco, to execute a 3000-square-foot mural depicting "The Epic of Culture in the New World".

The United States is by no means alone in this desire for an isolated and distinctive art; the demand is reinforced by all the nationalism of the day. In this respect the Germans, the French, the English, the Poles, the Italians differ only in so far as they believe that they already have a national art, or have still to develop it. The demand is given sanction also by practically all the scholarship of art in English. Our histories of art are based on the generalization that the unity of Christendom ended with the Middle Ages: everything since Giotto is classified in local or national schools. Yet the critics in search of a native American art complain that they can find none, since our work merges at every stage into the current of European work. If there is a relationship so close as this, what can be said of the history which fails to study it?

Surveys such as the *Propylaen Kunst-Geschichte*, a notable exception to the national-school method of classification, make here a contribution of the first importance. They show that in spite of inevitable and healthy local diversity, Western culture has retained its basic unity in the arts down to the present day. The unity of the Western mind did not die with the Middle Ages. The culture of each century since the Renaissance is also, in the largest sense, a European culture. Its unity is the more imposing in that it has existed, since the eighteenth century, in spite of the expressed desire of the peoples concerned. European scholars have not extended their studies to include the United States, and there is as yet no book which attempts a correlation of American art with that of nineteenth-century Europe. But the United States, too, has been included in the Western mind; and its arts are, like the far more deep-seated national arts of France and Germany, part of a unity larger than state boundaries.

A demand for a "native" American art which arises out of ignorance of these considerations need not blind one, however, to something of genuine value hidden in its obscure loyalty. The need to foster a living art in the United States, able to stand on its own feet, able to permeate and give dignity to the inchoate culture of this country, is a matter for serious thought. But if it is a duty of criticism to help establish such an art, a concentration upon "Americanism" is not the method by which it will be accomplished. Art may be strongly American, yet weak and bad, incapable of adding anything of value to our life. No one will deny that any valid art has its roots in its own soil, for an artist is always the child of his environment. But it is to be doubted if Michelangelo would have become a cornerstone of Italian culture if he had thought only of being Italian. The evidence of the history of art is that not even peasant crafts are wholly native.

> Art has no nations—but the mortal sky
> Lingers like gold in immortality.

II

The epoch of democracy, which opened with the American and French revolutions, introduced a new set of philosophical, social, political, and artistic ideals. It is too easy to speak of these as if they were merely disintegrating forces. They were also motive forces, not only splitting apart eighteenth-century culture, but driving the nineteenth century onward in successive waves of movement. The important point, for the present argument, is that these forces operated in unison through all the peoples of the West.

The middle class rose to power. Rationalism became a dominant force, bringing on the part of artists an unparalleled deference to writers and critics. Each nation, discontented with the existing order, felt the urge to recreate the world in the image of some distant era. Each country conducted the movement in its own way. Rousseau, in France, preached a return to the natural man. In Germany the doctrine of Winckelmann, reinforced by Goethe, was a return to the classic world of Greece. The doctrine of antiquity soon took root among the republicans of France and America. In the United States Jefferson was the leader of a blend of the two impulses, modified by experience of the American frontier. Even conservative England had William Godwin.

A devotion to history was the centre of the movement which dominated the arts from about 1790 to 1830. The new generation, sceptical toward its own world and equipped with the first critical studies of Greek and Roman monuments, set out to replace the traditions of the eighteenth century by antique forms.

Classic models were no longer freely adapted, as they had been by the artists of the Renaissance: precise archaeological correctness was the ideal.

The Capitol at Richmond, Virginia (1794) was the first thoroughgoing, architectural example of the classic revival. Jefferson sent home its design, modeled on the Maison Carrée at Nîmes, while he was American Minister in Paris. He made a more ambitious attempt to create a classic architecture for the New World in the University of Virginia (1817). Temples in each of the classic orders as well as the Pantheon were included in the design, so that the campus might be a model for the architecture of the new generation. By this time temples were sprouting from Virginia to central Europe. Schinkel's great buildings in Berlin, the Bank of England in London, the High School of Edinburgh, Latrobe's Bank of the United States (now the Customs House) in Philadelphia, Antolini's grandiose project for a Foro Bonaparte in Milan, the Walhalla near Regensburg, the Lee country house at Arlington, the Madeleine in Paris, scattered over half the world and a generation of time, are evidence of the grip of the classic ideal on the creative minds of the time.

This power of the antique world over the sensitive minds of that age is almost beyond comprehension today. "For me," wrote Jefferson with enthusiasm, "the city of Rome is actually existing in all the splendor of its empire." The city of Rome was a magnet which drew toward it the talented and poetic of all countries. From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the 1860's, when Paris replaced it as an international art centre, it held a continuous colony of foreign artists and students. At one time or another almost everyone studied or lived there—the American painters Copley, Benjamin West, and Washington Allston; the Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen; the German painter Cornelius and the other Nazarenes; the English sculptors Flaxman and Gibson; Turner, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Coleridge, Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper. The profound influence which Goethe's two years in Italy (1786-88) had upon his development is well known. They changed him from a *Sturm-und-Drang* artist, an admirer of Gothic cathedrals, to a classicist.

Eleven years before Goethe's visit, a young French painter named Jacques Louis David came there from Paris. The spell of the vast old city, which no archaeologist had yet disturbed, surrounded by the desolate plains on which the long-horned Roman cattle still grazed, changed David from a follower of Fragonard to the driving force of the classic revolution in painting. His *Oath of the Horatii* (1784) burst like a bombshell in the polite world of rococo painting. David's grandiose art, compounded in equal parts of Plutarch's Lives, the study of Roman statuary and coins, and indubitable genius, stamped the imitation of classic sculpture and an allegiance to literature upon French art for two generations.

David's power as a painter, combined with a racial feeling for form, gave French classic painting a dignity of style which was lacking elsewhere. In Germany, where there was no strong tradition of style, the effect of the revolution was disastrous. Winckelmann's first convert, the eclectic Mengs, was not a great painter. A school of younger men, led by Carstens and Genelli, jettisoned the painter-like eighteenth-century technique for a draughtsman's style and based their art on an imaginary classic world. But while David was able to create a new style which lived for generations, the loss of traditional technique in Germany resulted in a long impoverishment.

The historical temper possessed England and America also. Two Americans, Benjamin West and Washington Allston, were the recognized leaders of historical painting in London from the 1770's to 1820. West's pupil, Trumbull, and David's pupil, Vanderlyn, tried indefatigably to introduce historical painting in the United States. They failed for economic reasons, rather than for lack of public interest. As late as 1827 the critic of the *New York Mirror* severely criticized the exhibit of the National Academy for its lack of historical subjects.

The classification of this period into national schools is particularly unjust to the sculpture of the classic movement. Canova in Italy, Schadow in Berlin, Flaxman in England, Thorwaldsen in Denmark, Houdon in France, are meaningless as isolated figures. In the eyes of their own day they formed the modern revival of sculpture. America, too, felt the current of enthusiasm which united Europe. Greenough, whose statue of Washington, nude to the waist and draped in a toga, was a scandal of the 1830's, and Hiram Powers of Cincinnati, were followers of Canova in the second generation. A more interesting example was the famous carver of ship figure-heads, William Rush of Philadelphia, our earliest true sculptor. There is difference in quality, but not in kind, between Flaxman's reliefs for Wedgwood and Rush's *Nymph of the Schuylkill*, made to ornament Philadelphia's new waterworks at Fairmount (built 1812-13).

It is not enough, therefore, to damn the classic movement as the first stage of nineteenth-century eclecticism. It was an epoch of the Western mind, which created ideals strong enough to align such diverse minds as Goethe and Benjamin West, Canova and Thomas Jefferson.

The romantic movement, as well, was a slow, collective change of interest, affecting the whole of Europe and America. Its origins were too far apart and too spontaneous to be understood in any other way. Existing as an undercurrent of sentiment through the whole classic period, it began to come to the surface about 1800 and by 1830 (the year in which *Hernani* was presented in Paris) romanticism was almost everywhere the leading force. It triumphed in England, Germany, and America more quickly than in France, where David had created a majestic fortress of style, to reduce which three major geniuses were required.

In 1798, the year in which appeared the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge and the *Athenaeum* published by the brothers Schlegel, William Blake was already filling an essentially classic style (linear, generalized, formal rather than naturalistic) with the radiance of mysticism. The art of England's great romantic found its parallel in north Germany in the work of Runge (*d.* 1810), another draughtsman-mystic. In the second decade of the nineteenth century the German classic style gave place to the anaemic idealism of the Nazarenes, a Teutonic pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, and then to the sentimental, middle-class genre of the 1830's. In England "historical painting", which had always a broad romantic streak, degenerated through the same period into Victorian anecdote and genre.

At the same time, in France, two painters of first rank were giving romantic painting a dignity it lacked elsewhere. Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1819) substituted contemporary horror for classic myths. Delacroix, whose first important canvas, *Dante's Bark*, was painted in the year that Byron and Trelawney watched the flames of Shelley's pyre, established in painting the qualities of Byron and Berlioz. The romantic movement substituted colour and movement for draughtsmanship, passion for detachment, spontaneity for strict formal arrangement. Delacroix drew his subjects from Scott, the Greek war for independence, Algiers, Dante, the Crusades. It is a significant list.

The curious fragmentary genius, Washington Allston, returned to America in 1818. Thirteen years before, in Rome, he had rivaled Coleridge in conversation, defending Greek art against the other's preference for Gothic. In America he slid imperceptibly into romanticism. In 1819 he was painting a scene from Spenser, in 1823 Macbeth and the witches on the heath. Neither his colour nor his sentiment seems interesting now, but they were revelations to the American painters of the day.

To carry the rise of romanticism through the architecture and sculpture of Europe and America would be tedious and could only confirm the evidence of painting. The rise of landscape painting is more to the point; for nothing is more extraordinary than the shy springing up of landscape through the whole Western world, while the classic mood was in full power. Landscape, in the sense of grandiose arrangements after Claude or medleys of crags and banditti after the manner of Salvator Rosa, had been practised in the eighteenth century both in Europe and America. Venice had created a charming style of landscape in a realistic manner, but its themes were the canals and streets of the city. Landscapes in the Wordsworthian sense, in which nature herself is the theme, were a creation of the nineteenth century.

The first realistic study of a landscape for its own sake in America was painted near Worcester, Massachusetts, by Ralph Earl in 1800. That was just two years after the appearance of *Tintern Abbey*. Within the first decade of the century landscape, as we know it, was being practised by modest and unheralded artists, Earl in America, Moreau the elder and Georges Michel in Paris, Old Crome in the quiet countryside of Norfolk, Constable in Suffolk, Caspar David Friedrich in north Germany. It was not until the 1830's that it became a recognized movement, when the Hudson River painters in the United States, the Biedermeier School in Germany, and the Barbizon men in France, became national expressions for a deep devotion to nature.

The decades which saw the victory of Andrew Jackson, the Great Reform Bill, and the bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe, saw also the final victory of the pragmatic, middle-class mind in the arts. Whatever Wellingtons resisted, whatever academies attempted to keep alive the classic, literary manner, the tide was setting irresistibly toward middle-class interests and middle-class rationalism. While Dickens was creating his art of social satire out of a cockney world, an unsurpassed generation of black-and-white artists were establishing graphic satire in the new flood of journals. Keene, Leech, Daumier, Gavarni, the men of *Fliegende*

Blätter, made the bourgeois paterfamilias, his little businesses and holidays and his numerous brood, the stuff of great art.

A new spirit was stirring in the German universities. Charles Darwin was applying the cold light of reason to the problem of life. Agassiz was lecturing on geology and Thoreau was recording the poetry and charm of nature's trivia. The virulent scorn of Mark Twain for Sir Walter Scott and all his works is a fair sample of the feelings of a new artistic generation for the romantics. The victory of objective realism over romanticism in the middle of the century was the victory of the middle-class mind over the last echoes of a traditional culture.

In 1845 the paintings of two unheralded young men, one in France the other in Germany, made a simultaneous statement of a new vision. Menzel's *Balcony Room* in Berlin and Courbet's *Midday Dream* (now in Detroit) are the first triumphs of the dispassionate eye. The German painted an empty room, with a sunlit curtain blowing gently inward on the summer wind. Simplicity, sunlight, the absence of any scheme of ideas (other than the purely visual), all the characteristics of art of the 1870's were already there. Convention was stronger in France. Courbet painted a sleeping nude. In the Paris Salons thousands of classic nymphs had been exhibited; but when Courbet's nude was exhibited in 1849, her robust physical reality seemed a little shocking. Courbet was the perfect symbol of a new world. Contemptuous of imagination or of anything in art but facts; loud, aggressive, magnificently gifted, frequently vulgar and lacking in a power of construction, creating often superb studies rather than works of art; as good a showman as Barnum, and a Communist, he is the nineteenth century incarnate.

The sturdy, independent minds of the next thirty years took up the same battle. Objective realism was the modern art of the sixties and seventies. Courbet, Manet, Degas, the Impressionists in France, Leibl in Munich (a pastiche of whose rich brushwork was brought to America by Whistler and Chase), Thomas Eakins and Winslow Homer, all were deep-rooted native artists. Their common objectivity shows how inescapably the artist is the child of his time.

It is possible to pursue down to the present day the waves of new interest which ran through the Western mind. When at the end of the century flashing brushwork was admired, it was the American Sargent, the Swede Zorn, and the Italian Boldini, who led the fashion. At the same period the preciousness and dilute tenderness of Whistler's nocturnes was the mood of most American painting (such as Dewing's nocturnes and the landscapes of Twachtman and Tryon); in France there were the quietists like Bonnard, as well as the Debussy-like art of Redon. The simultaneous revolt of the colourists in 1905-06—the Fauves in France, the Brücke in Dresden, and certain of the "Eight Painters" in New York; the return to the primitive, both to European peasant art and to the exotic Oceanic, Negro, and Pre-Columbian arts, which flourished from 1890 to 1910 (the great days of the Irish Renaissance, also); the rise of expressionism, of abstraction, of surrealism, of the post-War return to objective vision; all these are impulses which sprang up throughout the whole region of Western art.

The argument could be carried through all the arts, but to prove the point would require a thousand illustrations. It is impossible to do more than suggest here the data which show that the arts, for the last hundred years, have been united and carried forward by waves of thought which passed through all Western countries. Local differences existed; time-lags occurred as one region or another forged ahead. Yet the nineteenth and twentieth centuries show localisms no more pronounced than one finds in the Gothic of the thirteenth century.

The Americanism of our arts, therefore, is not a question to concern us. We are part of a larger unity, which we could not escape if we would. On the other hand there is always, in any vital artist, a certain passion, prejudice, and loyalty, which unite him to his own locality and people. But this, too, is automatic. When American art has been important, it has also been American. No one would mistake Copley or Homer or Eakins, Jefferson or Richardson or Sullivan, for artists of another nationality. It is only the little men who are colourless imitators. They will always imitate someone; it can matter little whether they imitate Frenchmen or Americans.

The standard of nationality is irrelevant. We need standards of quality, founded not on a part, but on the whole of the tradition in which we take part. It was only when the surveyor acquired a measure of general validity that he knew whether the hill in his village was a molehill or an Alp. Our artists suffer for lack of an exacting standard, which will call out and value their best work. We need to ask, not for "American" artists, but for great art in America. Then, because it is great art, it will express and clarify our life.

REVIEWS

The Size of Future Wars*

MR. NICKERSON has written a book which will infuriate a large part of its readers. Indeed one cannot help wondering whether he did not select his title with malice aforethought. The present reviewer has been reading *Can We Limit War?* in spare moments, carrying the volume around with him; and since the title on the jacket has a very high degree of visibility, a great many persons have noticed it and commented upon it. With almost complete unanimity they jump to the conclusion that we are here concerned with a pacifistic work intended to further that most peculiar American crusade, the outlawry of war. And anyone who takes up Mr. Nickerson's book on this assumption will not only be disappointed but in all probability intensely irritated.

Of course a reader familiar with the previous writings of Hoffman Nickerson could make no such error. The author of *The Turning Point of the Revolution*, of *Warfare, a Short History*, and of *The American Rich* could not by any stretch of the imagination be considered a pacifist or a believer in any vaguely humanitarian internationalism. Yet perhaps it is unfortunate that this most enlightened treatise should be given a title which will encourage reading only by those who are beyond salvation or those already familiar with the author's line of thought. For this book should have a very wide audience, if only because it supplies a rational basis for the vague prejudices of the normal man and shows how that very basis constitutes some slight reason for hoping that the wars of the future may perhaps be "limited" with regard to their destructiveness, both physical and moral.

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* CAN WE LIMIT WAR? *by Hoffman Nickerson* (STOKES. 317 pp. $2.75)

It should be understood at once that Mr. Nickerson uses the word "limit" in a rather special and technical sense. He bases his whole line of thought upon the classical distinction in military science between wars of "limited" objective and those of "unlimited" objective, or "general" wars. It is with the latter that the modern world has been chiefly familiar. The campaigns of Napoleon, the American Civil War, the World War were all struggles intended to destroy completely the losing side. That they did not do so was merely because a *totally* "unlimited" war is almost impossible in civilized society. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the author presumes that war is an inevitable accompaniment of human life, at least as we are ever likely to know it. He bases this premise upon the observable fact that the fundamental cause of warfare is always moral (using the word in its widest significance) and that moral differences between peoples or nations have always existed and are perhaps more marked today than ever before. Where there are moral differences, there are the seeds of war; and even assuming that moral differences can often be compromised, still a certain proportion of them must inevitably be settled by bloodshed. Of course this is not to say that economic forces or political differences play no part as enemies of the peace, but both of these causes of strife are effective only if they produce moral effects in the minds of the potential belligerents. And from this it follows that the only firm foundation for peace is moral unity. This is admirably expressed in a quotation from Sir Robert Borden: "Without moral and spiritual disarmament all practical steps toward disarmament are absolutely vain."

Indeed Mr. Nickerson goes even further than this. He broadly hints that, so long as it is not too destructive, war may be a human necessity. Its disciplinary effect on those participating, its emphasis on self-sacrifice on the part of the individual, its furtherance of the admirable qualities of strength and personal bravery are perhaps necessary tonics to overcome the natural laziness and selfishness of humankind. Yet any positive benefits which may arise from warfare are certainly of no importance when war is waged in the "unlimited" and horribly destructive way to which we have been accustomed in the last hundred and fifty years.

What then of the future? Alarmists of all kinds inform us that we shall probably live to see another world conflict, and that this conflict will be so much more destructive than the last, because of technical improvements in the apparatus for slaughter, that our civilization will be destroyed utterly. In *Can We Limit War?* Mr. Nickerson has set himself the task of analyzing this attitude and trying to determine its basis in probability.

He first makes clear the forces which can operate to make war less devastating. These are moral, economic, political, and technical. Of course all these are interrelated, and the moral force is generally basic.

When Europe was united under one form of Christianity, and hence was morally one, warfare within the confines of Christendom was so strictly limited by customs like the "truce of God" and by the institutions of chivalry as to assume more the nature of banditry, sport, or police-work than the terrible national struggles we are familiar with. In fact the only truly serious wars of mediaeval Europe were purely moral in origin and were waged against the Turks and the Tartars.

The economic factor in relation to war is peculiar in that its positive aspects may or may not be relevant whereas negatively it is always a limiting force. In other words, two nations of great poverty simply cannot fight an unlimited war, for they cannot, physically, supply either the personnel or the materiel for the length of time and the effort which such a war implies. But by the same token a rich country cannot sustain a general conflict if those who control its wealth refuse to support the government. Thus even an economic factor may be dominated by a moral. This is even truer in the case of purely political forces in their relation to the limitation of warfare. For these are, in the last analysis, always moral in that they involve the will of the people concerned.

Mr. Nickerson makes a most interesting and valuable point in connection with the fourth force limiting war: the technical factor. It is always on this ground that the horrors of the future are based; yet here we are told, and with apparent justice, that for every technical improvement in destructive weapons there is always a balancing improvement in defense. Thus the answer to poison gas was the gas mask; the answer to the machine-gun is the tank. From this principle Mr. Nickerson deduces a corollary: that the technical effectiveness of weapons has no relation to the destructiveness of war, a proposition self-evident in itself since materiel is, after all, inanimate, and its use depends ultimately on the moral attitude of the user.

Thus, with the single exception of poverty, we see that every apparent force which works toward the limitation of war is a moral force. The question immediately arises as to whether the moral force has ever been strong enough, or could ever be strong enough to keep warfare from being a Frankenstein's monster. The determination of this point requires an examination of history, and here Mr. Nickerson's thesis must stand or fall. He devotes the greater part of his book to historical examination from this point of view, and the present reviewer, although inclined to agree in large part, does not feel qualified to offer detailed judgement. Let it suffice to summarize Mr. Nickerson's findings.

We are shown first how the essential lack of moral unity in Greek civilization was the cause of endless and exhausting warfare, sometimes limited, sometimes not. We note in passing that Athens, the strongest of Greek democracies, waged the bloodiest and most debilitating of Greek wars. We see Rome gradually emerging from obscurity, unifying Italy, waging a successful unlimited war with Carthage, then disrupted internally, and finally emerging from chaos as the mistress of the Western world under the moral unity of the Empire. For several hundred years war is so completely limited by the *pax romana* that it takes merely the form of border patrol work and squabbles over the Imperial succession. Finally the *pax romana* is destroyed, largely from within, and a new form of limitation, based on the unity of Christendom, produces several more centuries of limited warfare. At last the religious quarrels of the Renaissance disrupt the moral unity of Europe and we have a century and a half of unlimited destruction, followed by the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during which the concept of decorum and the gentleman served once more as a force of sufficient moral unity to prevent unlimited warfare. It was only with the democratic outburst, first in France, and then all over Europe, based on the glorification of human nature and the egalitarian theory, that we once more have unlimited warfare, this time on a scale unknown since before the Christian era. This kind of warfare, almost universal in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is based on the conscript army and seems to be the inevitable companion of democracy. Its principles emerged clearly from the campaigns of Napoleon; it reached its *reductio ad absurdum* in the World War.

It is of course unfair to try to summarize over a hundred pages of careful historical analysis in one paragraph. Yet it is perhaps worth while to have made the attempt if only it will lead readers of this review to the original. For here full tribute must be paid our author. Whether or not his views and interpretation be sound, they are intensely stimulating and presented with a clarity of style and analytic force very rarely found in American scholarship.

This historical discussion leads inevitably to the crucial question: What of the future? Here again a summary of Mr. Nickerson's views cannot help being unfair. He sees reason for hope. If there is indeed a relation between democratic ideas and unlimited warfare, then the great increase in anti-democratic forms of government which has characterized the last few years may be a sign of hope, despite the bellicose pronouncements of dictators. Again, the increasing cost of weapons may make war on an unlimited scale impossible, although there is nothing to be gained from a deliberate political effort to reduce armaments. Armaments, after all, are an outward and visible mark of an inward and spiritual state, and it is this state of mind which must be attacked if the wars of the future are to be truly limited.

From here on Mr. Nickerson seems less sure of his ground. He is convinced that the only possible moral unity which may serve to reunite the great powers of the West is a religious unity, a unity in a Universal Christianity. But he admits that he does not know the recipe for accomplishing this most desirable end. Apparently what he visualizes is a mixture of Papal discipline with Anglican latitudinarianism, the whole broth to be strictly free of anything Protestant. With this formula disagreement will certainly be almost universal, and it seems somehow far less realistic than the rest of *Can We Limit War?* Yet the desirability of a reunited Christianity must be admitted, and there are those who will earnestly desire that this consummation may be more than a pious hope. For in the last analysis Mr. Nickerson's thesis comes down to the fact that if the West cannot achieve moral unity, there is little likelihood of its finding a way to arrest the cancerous and perhaps eventually fatal growth of unlimited war.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

The Religion of Disinterestedness*

IN THIS collection of twenty essays, which the author offers as tracts for the times, the basic principle is Dr. Niebuhr's conviction that our modern culture is failing us in the hour of our need. We are at the end of an era. Our civilization is falling in ruins about us, and we are being summoned to the task of building the house of life on foundations for which we have not planned.

As an observer of the world crisis Dr. Niebuhr is appalled at the urgency of the issues that face our generation. He sees us so poorly equipped that we are unable to find anywhere an adequate political and religious philosophy to direct and guide us in the work to which the historic moment destines us. In the mechanistic and impersonal relations of this trader's civilization we have a moral culture built upon the quicksands of prudential self-interest and a philosophy of life which understands neither the heights to which life may rise nor the depths to which it may sink. We are without ethical insight and our leaders are lacking in political sagacity. The Niebuhr verdict is that what we sorely need is a more radical political orientation than we have at present as well as a renewal of more conservative religious convictions than are comprehended in the culture of our day.

In face of this political and spiritual difficulty the author dedicates this *livre de circonstance* to an effort to shake the easy faith of our modern liberalism and

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*REFLECTIONS ON THE END OF AN ERA *by Reinhold Niebuhr* (SCRIBNERS. 302 pp. $2.00) to awaken us to the tragic significance of the facts of contemporary history. With this purpose in view he mercilessly analyzes the chief phenomena of the capitalistic régime under which we live. He finds it, with its class antagonisms, its maldistribution of wealth, its social and economic injustice, to be doomed to a speedy and inevitable extinction. In his estimate, if it should last another century its rise and fall would be compassed by less than three hundred years. Compared with the longevity of feudalism, the life of which covered a period of one thousand years, the reign of the business man seems to Dr. Niebuhr to be pathetic in its brevity.

In elaborating his plea for a more radical political orientation our author asserts that economic power must be dealt with rigorously. The future collectivism is described by him, not as having the sense that all property will be collectivized as it has been in Russia, but as simply meaning that the present disproportion of economic power, which he regards as inherent in the private ownership of what he calls social processes (by which expression he seems to mean public utilities as well as localized natural resources) is the main cause of modern injustice. It is his belief that this particular cause of injustice must ultimately be eliminated or appreciably mitigated by social ownership. Modern society must reappropriate the lessons of primitive society, he claims; for, in the hunting and pastoral periods, common ownership was recognized wherever the interests of the whole society demanded that the resources and instruments which all its individuals required should never be privately owned.

But Dr. Niebuhr has a keen eye for the egoistic impulses of human nature. He therefore demands that there be a new assertion of the value of religious disinterestedness; we must formulate a radical social ethic as the most effective manifestation of our religious and moral ideal. This new social ethic is to be derived neither from the doctrines of orthodox Christianity nor from the teachings of liberalism; the former is held by Dr. Niebuhr to have built religion's ultimate faith in the meaningfulness of life upon one event in history (the Incarnation) which, he says, is not truly historical, and the latter does not adequately recognize the tension between spirit and nature. His conclusion is that the requisite ethical tension is to be the achievement, not of the Churches, but of the radical idealists who learn in bitter experience how real is the conflict between nature and spirit.

So it is to religious individualism that Dr. Niebuhr looks for our social salvation. How this links up with his plea for a new affirmation of disinterestedness is apparent from the following passage:

> In ethical religion the absolute is defined in moral terms, in the ideal of love, for instance. It becomes the moral obligation to affirm all life rather than the life of the ego, and to subject the self to the demands of life *per se*. In straining after the highest possibilities of life the individual becomes the more conscious of the inertia of nature which prevents him from realizing them. He recognizes that there is "law in my members which wars against the law that is in my mind".

Now the trouble with this religio-ethical theory is that its moral implications rest on a psychological system that is unsound. Far from there being a moral obligation on the individual to affirm all life other than his own, the very constitution of his being forces him to affirm his own life above everything else. In other words, he is forced by the innermost law of his being to seek his own good and he cannot, at any moment, seek anything except what his reason approves as his good. Even in unselfish service of others, he is pursuing his own personal good. Even in the highest form of sacrifice, of altruism, of disinterestedness, what ultimately motivates him is his instinctive stretching-forth for his own good as he sees it at the moment. Aquinas taught this seven centuries ago. A thousand years before the days of the great scholastic, Aristotle taught the same thing.

To a generation of men who have been reared on the post-Kantian ethic of disinterestedness this teaching may seem startling at first sight. But the Thomistic distinction is convincing. In this distinction, love of others is of two kinds, either *amor concupiscentiae* or *amor amicitiae*. In the former a man loves another for the sake of some advantage which accrues to him from that love, as a workman, for example, may love and serve and respect an employer who is kind to him. In the latter, a man loves another for that other's own sake, seeing his good in that person's good and putting himself in that person's place. In each case the love of one's own good is the root of the benevolence, as it is of every human impulse. As Aristotle says in his *Ethics*, that which pertains to friendliness toward others is grounded on that which pertains to the love of self.

But Dr. Niebuhr prophesies not only a morality of purer disinterestedness but also a religion of grace which shall console the human spirit to its inevitable defeat in the world of nature and history. Now, the word *grace* in religion has two definite connotations, one for the Catholic and one for the evangelical Protestant. The Catholic understands it as a free gift from God, ethical in scope, supernatural in character and in operation, and charged with a sanctifying power which is operative pre-eminently in the sacramental system. The evangelical Protestant sees it as the free active love of God for his sinful children, so personally present in Christ as to elicit a saving faith by means of the felt significance of the Redeemer.

But you may read our author's essay on the assurance of grace without discovering anywhere an affinity between the Niebuhr notion of grace and either of these classical concepts. He describes the experience of grace as the apprehension of the absolute from the perspective of the relative, whereby the unachieved is in some sense felt to be achieved or realized. Grace is for him something that partakes of the nature of paradox and its function in religion is that it "makes present reality bearable even while it insists that God is denied, frustrated and defied in the immediate situation". So Dr. Niebuhr, like other liberals who borrow the verbal coinage of the orthodoxies they have foresworn, gives to the old terminology a meaning and value peculiarly his own.

As a general criticism of the book it must be said that the author, in discussing the crisis through which our generation is passing, has decidedly limited his perspective. Seeing only the acutely chaotic phenomena, he allows his imagination to linger over the destructive elements at work. Apparently he knows little of the cultural reserves of our Western civilization. He seems almost unaware of the actual operation of the corrective forces which, springing from the depths of our spiritual heritage, are tending more and more to re-adjust the cultural balance of the things by which we live.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

The Blind Emperor, Napoleon III*

MR. SENCOURT has subtitled his biography of Napoleon III "the Modern Emperor"; and in addition to presenting what is thus far probably the most accurate one-volume life of the Bonaparte who fell from power at Sedan in 1870, he has been at some pains to adduce specific arguments that his subject, often considered mysterious and reactionary, was in fact "in every sense the modern man . . . the man of the present hour".

For one thing, argues the biographer, the French Emperor was a forerunner of our modern dictators: "Plebiscites, dictatorship founded on direct national choice without the intermediary of parliaments . . . are among the governing ideas of 1933, exactly a hundred years after Louis Napoleon wrote them down and published them in his little yellow pamphlets." And in fact, until a few months before his reign ended in disaster, Napoleon III stood firmly upon the authoritarian principle. He believed in a central and absolute authority; he believed that the masses should not be allowed to "dominate men of ideas"; he believed in "the free instinct of a people accepting the guidance of authority". He put these beliefs into action by abolishing the French parliament (in response to a demand "to free the country from a government of talk", as the Austrian ambassador neatly put it) and by reigning for sixteen years as an absolute monarch. In this, and in a particular sense, he was indeed modern.

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* NAPOLEON III: THE MODERN EMPEROR *by Robert Sencourt* (APPLETON-CENTURY. 383 pp. $5.00)

But Mr. Sencourt rests his claim for the modernity of Napoleon III far more heavily upon other grounds. There were his policies in international affairs. Did he not foresee the rise of Poland, the establishment of Rumania, the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the elimination of Turkey from Europe? Did he not speak of the United States of Europe, organize some of the first international conferences, argue for disarmament? Did he not propose the solution for the Roman question which was finally adopted fifty years after his death, and did he not—to his own fatal embarrassment—support hotly the conception of the self-determination of peoples? There were likewise his economic and social views. He contended that "at the present time our large enterprises are hindered by a mass of restrictive regulations", and he tried to "remove those restrictions"; he spoke of "soldiers of prosperity in the Empire of peace"; he had read and digested Adam Smith, and came out for international trade; he pushed enthusiastically toward universal education; he said that religion was "a force working for the well-being of the poor"; and he argued that "each man for whom I win comfort is a recruit from the ranks of Socialism".

But if in all this Napoleon III was modern, he was modern in a very different sense from that represented by his authoritarianism: he was modern in the sense that, as Mr. Sencourt says, he was "interpreting the trend of the times", "foreseeing the inevitable course of history": he was, in short, being a good Liberal in a Liberal age. This latter comment Mr. Sencourt does not make, or makes only by implication: and the result is that he fails to recognize the central and significant anomaly in the life of this Emperor who turned an absolute authority to the service of Liberal ideas.

It is significant for more than one reason: significant because it helps to explain the ultimate destruction of the Emperor's authority; significant because it has its moral for the present. No one will quarrel with the ideals of Liberalism: peace, freedom, happiness; no one can quarrel with them. But there are many today who, having seen Liberal policies in action for a troubled century, will quarrel heartily with the means by which the Liberal hopes to achieve his end. Universal education, laissez-faire economics, humanitarianism in domestic social problems and in international affairs have been accompanied by a notable absence of peace both within and between nations, by an increasing absence of true freedom as democracy has yielded to plutocracy, and by a profound and universal *malaise* that mocks the Liberal dream. And those who see in a return to the authoritarian principle—despite the excesses which have accompanied its establishment in Italy and Germany—the only practical means of restoring not only order but freedom and the possibility of happiness, must blame Napoleon III for many things. They must blame him for his failure to realize that when in 1870, swept away by the Liberal sentiments which he loved to play with, he voluntarily relinquished his absolute authority for a return to parliamentary government, he was returning his people to the very chaos from which as Prince-President he had heard them begging freedom in 1852. When he says, as Mr. Sencourt makes him say:

> March in the van of the ideas of your time and these ideas will follow and support you. . . . March in the rear of them, and they will drag you after them. . . . March against them and they will destroy you. . . .

they must blame him for turning out to be an extraordinary prophet but a poor authoritarian: for it is of the very essence of authority, its virtue and its obligation, to stand for principles when they are fundamental, opposing when need be the ideas of the time. An attempt to justify the Emperor's graceful yielding to these ideas leads Mr. Sencourt into at least one curious position. He argues:

> As for the rearrangement of Europe, succeeding years have shown that to be inevitable, and if a Congress had been held when Napolean III urged, it would have prevented not only three wars, two of them hideous, but would have saved Europe at least many of the anomalies of today. . . .

That this "inevitable" rearrangement of Europe could really have been amicably effected over the conference table—Franz Josef politely waiving all rights to Bohemia, Hungary, and Slovakia, for instance, or Russia giving Poland her independence with freehanded magnanimity—seems obviously ridiculous. It is much more likely—and here we touch upon the possibility that a Europe of dictatorships may well prove more peaceful than a democratic Europe—that if in the fifties and sixties Napoleon III had abandoned his schemes of exerting his authority for the benefit of humanity at large (the Mexican adventure is an extreme example) and had set himself to cultivating his French garden as resolutely as Mussolini seems today to be cultivating the garden of Italy, the forces which caused those three conflicts might have spent themselves in less destructive ways.

To say all this is merely to contend that if, as Mr. Sencourt holds, Napoleon III was "in every sense the modern man", then he was the modern man chiefly in the bad sense, and too blind to see that he had in his hands the means to be modern in the good. It does not affect the fact that *Napoleon III: the Modern Emperor* is a sympathetic and well-documented account of the life and times of a man who will always be one of history's most dramatic and pathetic figures. Mr. Sencourt presents a considerable amount of hitherto unpublished material (notably from newspaper sources, from the Cowley papers, and from Hübner's dispatches to Vienna). With the exception of some rather purple passages in which he rides the hobbies of his dislike for Bismarck and his admiration for Eugenie, and of some curious notions about the psychology of sex as applied to the affairs of nations, the book is temperate and restrained. One could wish, perhaps, for a more detailed account of the ultimate social effects of the wave of prosperity which swept over France during his reign, as highroads and railways were built and factories established. Napoleon III stood midwife at the birth of industrial capitalism in France, and died before anyone realized the infant had lost its childish innocence; whereas Mr. Sencourt's only recognition of this fact is his tantalizing remark that it was the third Napoleon's function "to apply to the world of spreading industrialism the great sanities of the system worked out by the First Emperor". But the book should make excellent reading for those who found Mr. Guedalla's breezy treatment of the same subject too impressionistic and external, or who, having read *The Second Empire*, wish to renew their acquaintance with the most recent French Emperor on somewhat firmer ground.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

Charles Jekyll and Dickens Hyde*

WHOM the gods would destroy they first set to write a Life of Charles Dickens. Let them but touch pen to paper and they are lost. The plan, the design, the dream of the perfect Life must fly out the window within the first few hours. One imagines how they must look when they arise from the completed task—dazed, exhausted, half-mad with scruples heeded or scruples ignored, staggering with fatigue and certain of failure. Let them live long enough and they inevitably have another go at it. "But I forgot—", "But I never said—" must haunt their nightmares. The only possible biographer of Charles Dickens is Charles Dickens's Creator, and He finished with that masterpiece sixty years and more ago.

This is an ambiguous way to begin a review of as conscientious, as fair-minded, as straightforward a

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* CHARLES DICKENS, HIS LIFE AND WORK *by Stephen Leacock* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. 322 pp. $3.00)

Life as Stephen Leacock's, but with the best will in the world it is impossible not to see this as one more brave attempt to achieve the impossible. Mr. Leacock obviously wanted to write a biography which would do full justice to Dickens's genius and at the same time include all those disturbing items of information about Dickens's humanity, or lack of it, that are common knowledge today. The piety of a Forster, on the one hand, the blasphemy of an "Ephesian" on the other, added together might come nearer to giving a true picture than either uncorrected by its opposite. The truth about Dickens's insufferable attitude towards America and Americans should go in; and the news that the dreadful Flora was a picture of Dickens's first love, seen again after twenty years; and the world might as well hear straight out that Dickens and his wife separated without the amicability and mutual agreement that Dickens and his friends pretended; and it should be said outright too that the man was a snob and that his taste was not impeccable; and all that should be documented in so far as the thoroughness of the Old Dickens Guard would let it be documented. Then, to balance it, praise and appreciation and discriminating appraisal of his books. Would not a full picture of the man arise from some such treatment as that?

Ideally it should, perhaps; but it doesn't. Actually this seems like a book about Charles Jekyll and Dickens Hyde. A little more evil than good gets into the record, somehow, and the book goes with a limp from the time of Dickens's American visit. Up to that point Mr. Leacock has defended his subject as valiantly from Seymour's charges and all the other cries of "Plagiarist!" and "Boor!" as the most fanatical Dickensian of them all; but from then on the pettier, touchier *Doppelgänger* of the genius is emphasized. Everything Mr. Leacock says of him is true—although he has not tried to solve the mystery of that broken marriage; or perhaps it is fairer to say that he tries, fails, throws in half-a-dozen hints and abandons the Herculean task uncompleted—but to the true Dickensian none of it will seem really relevant.

Here Mr. Leacock may very well protest angrily that he is as true a Dickensian as the best. (This is the joy of being a Dickens fanatic: there are more factions, fights, and cat-slingings among the brethren than there are in Ireland.) "Ah," this reviewer will retort with a pitying smile, "but you are *not*. Pardon me while I show you your misapprehension." And then continue by saying that the *true* Dickensian has undergone an experience which is precisely, identically indistinguishable from falling in love. He has opened a book at random, been knocked down by a bolt from the blue, and from that time on he no more tries to be fair about the idol of his heart than a lover does about his lady. A Dickens-lover is a Dickens-*lover*; that's the long and short of it. On the whole, it is probable that those of us who came too late to see him in the flesh are the happiest Dickensians. We know (and we are right) that he was more than mortal. He was, and he left his imperishable record; so long as we are allowed to read him, to signal to each other by inserting such code-messages as "as inexorable as Jorkins" into our solemnest literary productions, we ask little more. What little more we *do* ask we are more likely to seek in Mr. Chesterton than in Mr. Forster; certainly we never go begging to Mr. Bechhofer-Roberts for his contribution.

"Now come; be reasonable!" a race which never reads Dickens may say. "He was a man; he left a very large family and an even larger circle of friends. He and his friends and his family have said enough absurd things to blast forever the idea that this fellow was a demi-god." By that you may *know* that they never read him. There are readers who love Dickens and readers who hate Dickens; is it possible that there exists a man who read him and came forth neutral or bored? Lovers and haters were never noted for impartiality. Perhaps Mr. Leacock comes as near impartiality as is possible, but he seems to be existing in that state which the Freudians so illuminatingly call "ambivalence": he hates the thing he loves, and vice versa.

The serious complaint to be made against a valuable book (and this is a valuable book, whatever strictures must be made against it) is that Mr. Leacock quotes extensively only from those letters, sketches, and passages which show Dickens in the worst light. He does not quote more than a phrase or two from the magnificent Dickens. He is addressing an audience presumably as familiar with his hero as Mr. Leacock himself, and perhaps feels that to quote from books which are supposed to be in every library would sound condescending, or would waste good space. But quotations are badly needed. One cannot recapture the full flavour of Dickens without reminders. He is so much too good to be true that we can never trust our good fortune. Give us just a page or two from the genius for every quotation from the American speeches—a whole paragraph of Sam Weller, or one large souvenir of Mrs. Gamp, or let Mr. Micawber have his head for twenty lines—and then return if you must to the irritable, over-worked, emotional ranter. That would have brought the book into truer balance. We should catch sight of the immortal Dickens in those quotations far more clearly than in the justest appraisal of his individual books. And what is even closer to our hearts, new Dickensians would arise (for the fate can overtake one in the time it takes to read a paragraph) who in their turn would never desert Mr. Micawber. This book will make no new lovers, one fears. But the elect will continue in their dogged adoration.

ALICE SHEPARD

Liberal, Socialist, Communist*

IN THESE three additions the John Day Pamphlets continue to be interesting, though anyone depending on this series for his intellectual provender would get the impression there was no thinking going on anywhere that was not liberal or Marxist; and thus would be rather behind the times.

Sir Arthur Salter is a distinguished witness to the fact that if a man thinks of capitalism as having been a good when it was "in its prime", he will inevitably take to collectivism as the best and only possible sequel. To be sure, Sir Arthur's collectivism is of a mild and vaporous sort, almost unexpressed and probably hardly realized. But one can be sure that a piece of writing called *Toward a Planned Society* will come from an author whose native leanings are collectivist: only in a servile state are such writers in their element. One looks for, and finds, the sentence, "We must assume the continuance of large-scale industrial organization"; and the sentence that our planned society must be able to "translate each increase in productive capacity into an equivalent increase in purchasing power". In other words, the one fixed, unquestionable dogma is that the huge chaotic structure resulting from all the tricks and dodges of a century and a half of laissez-faire, exploitation, and imperialism must remain unaltered: must be kept going even at the expense of the utter loss of liberty and sound ethics inevitably bound up with the notion of "planning" purchasing power to fit our productive capacities.

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* **The John Day Pamphlets.** No. 38, *Marx and America,* by Bertram Wolfe; No. 39, *Sweden,* by Marquis W. Childs; No. 40, *Toward a Planned Economy,* by Sir Arthur Salter. $.25 each.

Sir Arthur thinks of himself, however, as a champion of liberty, urging that with our planning we "retain the essentials of personal, economic, and political freedom"—by the last, of course, meaning the ballot. He has been made rather unhappy by the almost universal collapse in recent years of "what we were accustomed to regard as normal representative government", but thinks this "movement toward central control and central authority" can be arrested. He says, with a somewhat pathetic defiance, "Parliaments must remain the ultimate guardians of the public interest." But when one looks for his scheme for accomplishing this miracle—basing a new order on the form of government that made the old order possible—one is baulked. Business, it seems, is merely to reform itself, to adopt "self-government", with a little help and a little prodding from the national government. Just how voters are to be induced to elect the right kind of parliamentarians remains—as through the centuries—unelucidated. His international programme is even emptier: an economic advisory council associated with the League of Nations! . . . All Sir Arthur Salter's technical knowledge of economics and smooth flow of language do not save him from being, like any liberal, absurdly irrelevant; alike for those who are more realistic in their collectivism and those who know a better way.

Mr. Childs's *Sweden* has for subtitle "Where Capitalism Is Controlled". The author is of course at a disadvantage in trying to describe a national economy in thirty pages; but it is doubtful if even a book devoted to the data Mr. Childs has carefully collected would tell us much more than does his pamphlet: namely, that Sweden is blessed with a number of institutions which please a socialist. That doesn't get us very far forward: socialists have a way of picking the oddest things to rejoice in. Mr. Childs is particularly enthusiastic about the Swedish co-operative societies, and indeed makes out a good case for their beneficence and their utility in curbing trusts and monopolies. Only we are shortly told that "the co-operatives' first attack was directed against the margarine trust". Sweden, it seems, like Denmark—and certain areas in our own country—is a great producer of butter, but prefers selling it all to using any of it. Or as Mr. Childs rather naïvely puts it, "Because so much butter is exported to the Continent from Scandinavia, margarine is an important article of diet".

There would seem to be something slightly askew with a system whereby Denmark, for instance, imports soy beans from Manchuria to make margarine as a substitute for butter, meanwhile shipping huge quantities of butter to England, where the pastures lie cowless and the dole pours out. . . . Unless memory errs, butter was invented somewhat before margarine; and certain things now done in Scandinavia and Wisconsin used to be done in the home. . . . Surely there must be something more to Sweden than people who are glad to get their margarine, their light bulbs, their electric power, and their shoes cheaper than formerly. In Mr. Childs's report the whole country is divided between those who run private trusts, and those who prefer their capitalism controlled. If so, what is the matter with the Swedes?

In *Marx and America* Mr. Bertram Wolfe has done a very useful job, that of bringing together the references to this country to be found in the writings—including the letters—of both Marx and Engels. Whether Mr. Wolfe's quotations are complete does not appear; though the only reason to question it is the fact that he was apparently led to the task by a thesis, which may or may not have affected his selection as well as his comment. He is of the company of communists who do not approve the intransigent policies of the official Communist Party, but favour adaptation to local conditions, co-operation with other "workers' " groups, et cetera. He is able to present a number of remarks, particularly by Engels, which seem to support his position.

But the larger interest of the pamphlet lies outside that particular quarrel of the "sectarians" and the "exceptionalists", as they like to label one another. Mr.

Wolfe's quotations from Marx and Engels run from 1850 to 1892, thus covering the gold rush of '49, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the beginnings of the American labour movement, and the rise of Germany and America as industrial rivals of England. On all of these topics there are, amid *bizarrerie* and blindness, a number of penetrating observations, some of them evincing a quick grasp of forces destined to work themselves out only years later. In these "prophecies" Engels shows up as considerably more impressive than Marx, to judge from the examples given by Mr. Wolfe.

The following is from an article written by Marx early in 1850:

> Thanks to the gold of California and the tireless energy of the Yankees, both coasts of the Pacific Ocean will soon be just as populous, just as open to trade, just as industrial as is now the coast from Boston to New Orleans. Then the Pacific Ocean will play the same rôle as the Atlantic does now and as the Mediterranean did in antiquity and the Middle Ages—the rôle of the great seaway of world commerce; and the Atlantic Ocean will sink to the rôle of an inland sea as the Mediterranean is now.

One is reminded of the Jewish aptitude for spotting areas likely to prove good real-estate investments. Engels seems to have had a particularly keen sense for military alignments, in 1890 describing accurately the national forces that took up arms in 1914. "Both camps are preparing for a decisive struggle, for a war such as the world has never seen, where ten to fifteen million armed warriors face each other."

Most of the comments on America by both men are, of course, devoted to finding objective grounds for the chief Marxian obsession, that the course of industrial capitalism leads inevitably to an insurrection by the proletariat which will put them into power and introduce the Golden Age. During the rapid growth of industrialism in this country they were quick to notice developments which seemed to point in their direction, and sometimes successful in anticipating events. But it is to be noted that their insight and their prescience were rigidly limited: their gift lay in understanding courses of human events precisely when they were least human, most mechanical, most debased. A chain of events involving material tools used blindly for materialistic ends: that was the kind of thing they were sensitive to. With the result that not only were their diagnoses of particular cases often erroneous, but they had no conception whatever of forces opposed to those embraced in their highly simplified and dehumanized outlook.

In their discussions of America, for instance, they were inevitably prevented from grasping the significance of the Civil War—the major event in our history. For Marx and Engels the Abolitionist myth was the whole story: slavery was the issue, and defeat of the South was a triumph for liberty, progress, and humanity—a stepping-stone to the final consummation, the dictatorship of the proletariat: that diseased dream whereby the unfortunate denizens of capitalism's basement are, not redeemed from a state lower than slavery, but more rigidly fixed in their servitude and at the same time made the norm for the whole of society. "The present struggle between the South and the North", wrote Marx in 1861, "is . . . nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour." The real impulse that actuated the Southern resistance he quite lacked any organ for apprehending, as does any "historical" or "dialectical" materialist. But he was not wrong to favour the North ("He worked tirelessly to arouse the workingmen of Europe, and especially those of England, to the support of the Northern cause")—victory for the South would have meant defeat for industrialism, the only channel through which conditions could become evil enough for Marx's dreams—deriving at their root from an urge to destroy the traditional Western way of life—to have any chance of becoming reality.

The Reconstruction period made Marx very hopeful. "After the phase of civil war the United States is really only now entering into the revolutionary phase. . . ." In 1877 he wrote: "The policy of the new President (Hayes) will make the Negroes, and the great expropriations of land in favour of the railways, mining companies, etc. . . . will make the farmers, already dissatisfied, into allies of the working class." Here we see the absurd notions, still firmly believed by Marxists and cardinal points in their American propaganda, that farmers can be enlisted in a fight against property; and that an insurrectionary alliance with the Negroes will strengthen the position of aspiring revolutionary workers.

Engels, in one of his passages predicting a general European war, came very near to really profound insight. He wrote in 1888, If the war were fought to a finish without internal revolutions, a state of exhaustion would result such as Europe has not experienced for two hundred years. American industry would then win all along the line and would set us all before the alternative: either a relapse to pure agriculture for our own needs (American grain forbids any other kind), or—social revolution.

It is obvious that Engels did not consider the way of what he calls "pure agriculture" a realistic alternative to his type of revolution. It should be equally obvious that that way—the ancient agrarian-monarchical life of our culture, unaltered in essence by any devices of industrialism it may retain—is the one Europe is choosing. That is the clear meaning of Fascism—as only Scott Nearing of all the Marxians seems to recognize.

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